

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 31 OCTOBER 1963

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. D. E. Nicholson, Murrumba) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS

DENTAL CLINIC, TOWNSVILLE.—Mr. Tucker, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) What is the number of personnel employed in the dental clinic at Townsville, giving their classifications?

(2) What is the number on the waiting list at the clinic in respect of (a) adults and (b) children for (i) dental prosthetics and (ii) operative and restorative dentistry?

Answers:—

"The Townsville Hospitals Board has advised as follows:—

(1) The number of personnel employed in the dental clinic at Townsville and their classifications are as follows:—Dental superintendent, 1; Assistant dentists, 2; Female dental attendants, 3 (including 1 trained nurse); Dental mechanics, 4; Clerk, 1; Total, 11.

(2) The number on the waiting list at the clinic is 203, comprising—(a) Adults for (i) dental prosthetics, 14; (ii) operative and restorative dentistry, 39; (b) Children for (i) dental prosthetics, nil; (ii) operative and restorative dentistry, 150."

HOUSING COMMISSION RENTALS FOR WIDOW PENSIONERS.—Mr. Lloyd for Mr. Duggan, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

Following the recently granted increase in widows' pensions of £2 5s., were increases made by the Queensland Housing Commission in weekly rentals payable by this class of tenant and what would be the average increase made in all cases reviewed?

Answer:—

"Yes. For a widow who occupies a house erected under the 1945 Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement and who is in receipt of a rebate of rental, the rental is increased by one-quarter of the increase in her family income. Such increase in rent must be made in order to comply with the formula which forms part of the above Agreement."

CROWN LAND AT PALLARENDA, TOWNVILLE.—Mr. Tucker, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Lands,—

(1) Who is the contractor employed in clearing and levelling the Crown land at Pallarenda, Townsville, for subdivisional purposes?

(2) In view of a departmental or ministerial statement that these allotments would be available to the general public by June, 1963, why has this not eventuated?

(3) When is it now anticipated that these allotments will be available to the citizens of Townsville?

Answers:—

(1) "The contractors engaged in the Pallarenda Project are—(a) A. J. Sleight & Co. of Kimberley Street, Stuart, which company is responsible for clearing, earthworks, gravel paving and drainage. Work was to be completed by August 6, 1963. (b) Townsville City Council, which is undertaking kerbing and channelling. Work was to be completed on June 30, 1963. (c) Emoleum (Aust.) Limited,

who was engaged to do the bitumen surfacing. The date for completion is two weeks from the date on which the contractor is notified that the gravel pavements are ready for bitumen surfacing. A. J. Sleight & Co. is responsible for the job not being completed and action has already been taken to ensure that the work is finalised by the end of November, 1963. A progress report as at October 18, 1963, is as follows:—

Description	Per cent. complete
Earthworks	90
Gravel placed	98
Gravel compacted	10
Bitumen seal 1st coat	Nil
Bitumen seal 2nd coat	Nil
Bitumen seal 3rd coat	Nil
Kerbing and channelling	100
Manholes	100
Stormwater drains	100"

(2) "There is no record in the Department of any statement having been made that the allotments would be made available by the end of June last as the road works were not expected to be completed before August, 1963."

(3) "It is anticipated that the road works will be completed by the end of next month. The allotments are then to be surveyed, valuations obtained, and action taken to sell the allotments which involves the giving of adequate notice of sale. It is unlikely that the allotments will be available for purchase until March next year."

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT.—Mr. Murray, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Industrial Development,—

When will he be in a position to make a statement outlining the scope and functions of his new Department of Industrial Development?

Answer:—

"The Honourable Member will be aware that the new Department of Industrial Development has been created as part of the administrative arrangements which were approved by the Executive Council on September 26, 1963, and published in the *Government Gazette* of that day. The administrative responsibilities of the Department are set out in the *Gazette Notice*. In broad terms, the new Department consists of:—(i) The Department of Electricity Supply, formerly administered in conjunction with the Department of Mines; (ii) The Companies and Commercial Acts Office, formerly attached to the Department of Justice; and (iii) a Secondary Industries Section, which at present is in course of transition from the Department of Labour and Industry. So far as the lastmentioned section is concerned, the new arrangements will not be

completely operative until after certain supporting legislation is passed by this Parliament and until the newly appointed Director-General of Industry takes up his office. The contemplated legislation is being drafted and I propose to make a statement outlining the scope and functions of the Department when this Bill is being introduced."

ADDITIONAL AREAS FOR FORESTRY HARVESTING IN NORTH QUEENSLAND.—Mr. Wallis-Smith, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Local Government,—

In view of the fact that timber mills are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain supplies to carry over the coming wet season, will he give immediate consideration to having additional areas made available for harvesting?

Answer:—

"Records of current sales of Crown timber held by North Queensland saw-millers would indicate that the North Queensland mills would have adequate opportunity of providing for the wet season, and also of securing their quotas. In addition to sales then current, over 50 million superficial feet of Crown timber has been sold since May, 1963. The total quantity logged by North Queensland mills in the quota year 1962-63 was about 50,000,000 superficial feet. If the Honourable Member for Tablelands has in mind any particular supply area, specific enquiries will be made."

PETROLEUM LEASES.—Mr. Beardmore, without notice, asked the Minister for Mines and Main Roads,—

(1) Has the Minister read the reports in yesterday's "Telegraph" alleging that a Japanese company hoped to develop Queensland oilfields for production of crude oil for Japan?

(2) Will the Minister inform the House of any relevant conditions which will be included in petroleum leases granted in Queensland?

Answers:—

(1) "Yes."

(2) "Section 33 of the Petroleum Acts, 1923 to 1962, includes, inter alia, the following:—

'Reservations, conditions and covenants of lease.

(1) Every lease shall contain the following reservations, covenants and conditions, namely:—

(e) A covenant by the lessee that, if directed by the Minister not to dispose of any petroleum or petroleum products for use or consumption outside Australia, he will not so dispose of any petroleum or petroleum products.'

Any lease granted to a company Japanese or otherwise, that has found or finds petroleum in commercial quantities in Queensland will contain this covenant. This provision was inserted in the Act by virtue of the amendment passed by Parliament in December 1962, and it means that, if any company granted a lease departed from this covenant, it could lose its lease."

PAPER

The following paper was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed—

Report—

Co-ordinator-General of Public Works for the year 1962-63.

LAND TAX ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

(The Acting Chairman of Committees, Mr. Gaven, South Coast, in the chair)

Debate resumed from 30 October (see p. 1107) on Mr. Hiley's motion—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Land Tax Acts, 1915 to 1962, in certain particulars."

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (11.14 a.m.): As the Minister indicated, the Bill is to extend the exemption from tax on city blocks from £1,250 to £1,750 and, with the £2 minimum, give an effective exemption value of £2,230. In respect of agricultural blocks, the exemption has been increased from £3,750 to £5,250 or, allowing for the minimum, an effective exemption of £5,730.

It must be realised that valuations for taxation purposes bear no direct relationship to the valuations of the Valuer-General. Taxable valuations are based, generally speaking, on the formula brought down in the House in 1960. The principle applied was that the taxable value equalled the latest valuation of the Valuer-General minus the previous valuation divided by two and added to the previous valuation, or, in cases where the land was valued by the Valuer-General for the first time, 70 per cent. of the Valuer-General's valuation.

This means, then, that two or more blocks each valued at £10,000 could have entirely different valuations for taxation purposes placed on each block, depending on the original valuations and when they were made.

The Treasurer also mentioned in introducing the Bill that the rate in the £1 was to be varied. When he introduced the Bill in 1960 he said—

"At this stage I should like to indicate that, following my usual practice when a land tax matter is before the Committee, I have arranged to have circulated to hon. members some explanatory notes."

For reasons best known to himself, on this occasion the Treasurer has not followed what he said in 1960 was his usual practice. If he had circulated explanatory notes, they would have shown the decreases in taxation proposed by the Minister.

In dealing with the amount of tax in the £1, I believe that the Minister deliberately misled the Committee. He indicated that the present maximum rate of tax is 10d. in the £1 and then said that the Bill will reduce the maximum rate to 7½d. in the £1. Not only did he try to mislead hon. members but he also successfully misled "The Courier-Mail", because the report in that newspaper this morning reads—

"The rates of tax would fall from a maximum of 10d. in the £1 to a maximum of 7½d., while at the same time the graduated rate scale would be lengthened so that the maximum which now applied to holdings in excess of £75,000 would not be reached until £100,000."

The facts are that the report should have read that the rate of tax on holdings in excess of the maximum of the scale would be reduced from 10d. to 7½d., because under the existing tax formula we find that there are rates of tax in excess of 10d. It is true that a taxable value in excess of £75,000 attracts a rate of 10d., but there are other tax rates in excess of 10d.

To give two or three examples, we find that the present rate of tax on values between £30,000 and £49,999 is 10½d. in the £1.

Mr. Hiley: No, it is not.

Mr. HOUSTON: Yes, it is.

Mr. Hiley: No, it is not.

Mr. HOUSTON: My word it is.

Mr. Hiley: It is £951 0s. 10d. plus 10½d. on the excess.

Mr. HOUSTON: The excess works out at 10½d. in the £1.

Mr. Hiley: That is true. You look at the rates and do a little basic arithmetic and you will find how wrong you are.

Mr. HOUSTON: I am not wrong. The Minister will have plenty of opportunity to reply. The excess rate on valuations ranging from £50,000 to £59,999 is 1s. in the £1, and from £66,000 to £74,999 it increases to 12½d. If the rate is so much in the £1 on excess amounts, surely that is a rate in the £1 on such excess. Surely the Minister will not argue that the rate fixed for an excess amount is not a rate in the £1. If we compare this legislation with the Income Tax Act, we find that that Act lays down a fixed amount up to a certain income, plus a certain rate in the £1 for the excess amount. I do not know whom the Minister is trying to kid, but he is not kidding me.

I agree that this legislation should bring some relief to landholders other than those who have had their land re-valued this year,

because the basis of assessing the taxable value has not changed. On the other hand, I think that those who have had their land re-valued this year will be asked to pay more than they paid previously.

The Treasurer also said that the measure was being introduced to keep an election promise. It is good to see a Government honouring an election promise, but I think we should be careful to see whether the promise given as election bait, which has now become a gift or a reward for the Government's election, is as juicy and as palatable as was indicated during the election campaign.

As the Treasurer said, land tax was introduced as a means of inducing large landholders either to break their land up into smaller areas or to pay more money to the Crown as a kind of penalty. In 1959 the Treasurer recognised this fact. He also made the point during the debate on the 1959 measure that the Government believed it should be a general tax, and that the Government could not afford to lose the revenue from land tax. In fact, he now says that, after this amending Bill becomes law, the Crown will still receive a near-record land tax return.

In his introductory speech, the Minister also tried to make out that this Government is the only one that has given land tax concessions, but I think we should examine the position carefully. It is true that land tax was introduced in 1915 with a statutory exemption of £300. However, it should be remembered that at that time the best suburban blocks of a large size could be bought for well under £300. In effect, therefore, the exemption in 1915, on town as well as other residential blocks, was very substantial. The rates applying on taxable amounts were—

£300—£499	1d.
£500—£999	1½d.
£1,000—£1,999	1¾d.

On valuations in excess of £75,000 the rate was a maximum of 6d. Those rates were changed somewhere along the line, but in 1958 we had rates that were very similar to those that applied in 1915. On checking the figures, the main difference that I can see is that the maximum rate was 8d. in the £1. However, the exemption value was still £300.

From 1922 to 1950 a concessional exemption on land used by primary producers for agricultural, dairying, or grazing purposes was £1,500, reducing by £6 for every £5 value in excess of £1,500 till it reached the statutory exemption of £300 at £2,500.

Let us remember that between 1948 and 1952 many parts of Queensland were valued by the Valuer-General for the first time. These values showed a slight increase, and in 1951, when land values were unfrozen—it will be recalled that up till then they were frozen—a Labour Government raised the statutory exemption for residential purposes to £500. The point I wish to make is that, although there was no alteration from 1915

to 1951, land values were virtually frozen for a considerable part of that time, and the basis of applying land tax to property was not altered in any way. When there was a variation in land values, the Labour Government of the day took immediate action to increase the exemption to £500. As to the concessional exemption, it went to £1,700 and cut out at £2,700. In 1952, due to a further valuation, the residential exemption was lifted to £700 with a concessional exemption of £1,900 cutting out at £2,900. At that time, too, a minimum tax of 10s. was imposed, which gave actual values of £819 and £1,955 respectively.

From 1952 to 1957 land values remained fairly stable. That is shown quite conclusively by the Valuer-General's valuations between 1952 and 1957. In that period of five years Brisbane's land value rose by only 7.49 per cent.

However, at 30 June, 1957, values for other parts of Queensland were issued after the first valuations were carried out by the Valuer-General, and they showed some marked increases over the values used by the various authorities up to that time. I suppose a typical example would be Warwick, first valued as at 30 June, 1957. It showed a 271.79 per cent. increase on the previous ratable value. This showed that the Valuer-General's values would be higher than the locally-assessed values. Therefore, we must consider that the previous valuation of Warwick was rather low at the time because, at the same time as Warwick was valued at £272,000, Redcliffe had a value of £2,460,873. The Valuer-General's valuation at that time reflected the inflationary trend in land values.

Between 1953 and 1958 Bundaberg rose by 45.25 per cent; between 1954 and 1959 Cairns rose by 64.03 per cent; between 1954 and 1959 Redcliffe rose by a further 66 per cent. and Toowoomba by 35 per cent.

Coming to country valuations, hon. members will have fresh in their minds the way land values rose at Gatton and the resultant appeals to the Land Court.

If, at this stage, we look at land tax revenue over the years, starting at 1956-57, under a Labour Government, the amount received was £1,428,414. In the first year of the present Government, 1957-58, it was £1,468,047, from 25,289 taxpayers.

Due to the increase in land values throughout the State, the Government amended the Act in 1958 to provide, among other things, a minimum tax of £2. This gave an effective exemption of £1,079 for residential land and of £2,379 for country land. Of course when the Government introduced the legislation to make the minimum tax £2, the Treasurer said that the purpose was to avoid sending out numerous assessments for small amounts. That may be true up to a point but I feel that it was also brought about by increases in land valuations that were taking place at the time. I venture to say that the Treasurer

then realised that the inflationary trend in land values would continue to a marked degree.

After the 1958 amendment, in 1958-59 the income from land tax was £1,412,396, from 17,401 taxpayers. As a result of that legislation there was a reduction of £55,651 in income and there were 7,728 fewer taxpayers. However, further rises in land values brought about another amendment in 1959, which provided for an exemption of £1,000 for residential land and £3,000 for country land. There was still a £2 minimum charge. It gave an effective exemption value of £1,479 in the city and £3,479 in the country. That amendment also set the pattern for adjusting tax amounts. As I said previously, there was a fixed amount and an excess rate was charged on anything over the fixed value. As the Treasurer said at the time, it brought about a situation where the tax on the higher land values increased, and there was a reduction in the case of the lower land values. Take, for example, an £8,000 valuation. Prior to that amendment £127 1s. 8d. was payable, but after the amendment it dropped to £86 9s. 2d. At the other end of the scale, on a valuation of £33,000 the tax rose from £842 5s. 10d. to £951 0s. 10d. That gives an indication of the effect of the amendment at that time.

If we check on the excess, or the amount charged in tax above the fixed rate, we get some interesting comparisons. In 1957, under £500 the rate was 1d. in the £1, and it stayed at 1d. in 1959. Between £500 and £999 the rate was 1½d. and it went to 2d. in 1959. Between £2,000 and £2,499 it was 2d. and it went to 4½d. in 1959. Between £4,000 and £4,999 it went from 4½d. in 1957 to 6d. in 1959. As I said earlier, the excess amount went up as high as 12½d. Over £75,000 it went from 8d. to 10d. flat.

As a result of the 1959 amendment land tax rose to £1,572,328 from 13,073 taxpayers, in other words, £159,932 more from 4,328 fewer taxpayers.

In 1959 the Minister made this comment—

"The Government made no apology for increasing the rates for the bigger aggregations. We do not want to encourage the development of any narrow landed aristocracy in this State."

I hope that the Minister has not forgotten those sentiments.

About 1959 more valuations were made for the first time by the Valuer-General in various parts of Queensland. In Charters Towers the first Valuer-General's valuation raised the previously accepted value by 649½ per cent. In Mackay the valuation rose by 532.72 per cent. over the previous valuation. Rises between 1955 and 1960 at the Gold Coast were to the extent of 322 per cent. In 1960 the Government introduced the ratable-value formula which I referred to earlier. Even with that the income from land tax rose to £1,745,163. In other words, there was an increase of £172,835.

A further increase in the Valuer-General's valuations in other parts of the State brought about the first 1962 amendment, which exempted city allotments of an area up to and including 40 perches. However, the income from land tax increased further to £1,762,207, in 1961-62. When the Brisbane valuations became known, it was found they had increased by over 200 per cent. in many instances and a further amendment was enacted late in 1962. That amendment increased the city exemption to £1,250 and the country exemption to £3,750, giving an effective exemption in fact of £1,730 for the city and £4,230 for the country. By that amendment, the area exemption for city blocks was lifted to 48 perches. However, even with these exemptions, and a reduction in the number of people paying tax in 1962-63, there was a return of £1,654,820, from 13,305 taxpayers.

The new land values were still rising and there was a need for propaganda for the forthcoming State election, so the Treasurer promised a further amendment and reduction, which is contained in the legislation before us now. With the latest proposed reduction the estimated income for this year is £1,750,000—or £321,586 higher than the figure under Labour in 1956-57—from 12,750 taxpayers. With more exemptions and lower tax rates more income is expected. This can be achieved only by an increase in land valuations; even splitting up existing properties causes an overall reduction in tax received. If this is so, it could well turn out that those who are left as taxpayers, that is, the 12,750, will have to shoulder an increased tax burden brought about by increased valuations.

That prompts me to submit that I think the Government should immediately tackle this problem of increasing valuations. In Brisbane, due to the town plan, many large allotments are virtually frozen. The owners cannot do anything with them, yet they are charged land tax. I believe that land should be exempted when it is non-productive or is left for any other purpose. I know one area of 83 acres for which the Valuer-General's valuation, prior to the last Brisbane valuation, was £1,305. It rose to £6,525 and has a taxable value of £3,915, on which £59 10s. tax is payable. The owners of the land have to pay rates, from which they receive no exemption, and land tax as well. They cannot sell the land; because it is declared non-urban in the town plan no-one wants to buy it. I believe that the term "non-urban" should not exist, or, if owners have land that they cannot use, the Government should not impose land tax on it.

(Time expired.)

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (11.40 a.m.): In introducing the Bill the Treasurer said that the only reason for the retention of land tax as a revenue producer was to carry out its original purpose of preventing the aggregation

of land. Many Governments in the past, and this Government in particular, have regarded this form of taxation as one to be retained in perpetuity. It is a source of revenue too valuable for any Government to surrender.

The Bill had me puzzled for a while as to how the Government intended to go about raising more from land tax this year than last year while at the same time increasing the exemptions and reducing the maximum rate on the graduated scale from 10d. to 7d. in the £1. Then it struck me that some parts of Queensland, notably the city of Brisbane, would be detrimentally affected by the increased valuations of land as compared with other parts of the State. It is obvious from an examination of the increased valuations that many more people in Brisbane will come within the provisions of the Land Tax Act than before, while fewer people outside will. Remember, this will be the first year on which assessments will be based on the increased Brisbane valuations. The Treasurer shakes his head, indicating the negative. The average increase over the whole of Brisbane was 180 per cent. and it is proposed in the Bill to increase the exemption from land tax from £1,250 to £1,750. I have only the 1960-61 report but it shows that most land tax payers in Queensland came in the category having a taxable value between £500 and £2,000. If we strike a mean figure of £1,600 for ordinary valuation purposes and add the 180 per cent. average increase for the city of Brisbane, then subtract half the increased valuation, we find that many more people in Brisbane will be paying land tax.

The fact is that in this city, as in many other parts of Queensland, a complete revision of valuation methods is called for. That was accepted by the previous Minister in charge of the department, Mr. Richter, but we have heard little about it since. If all land valuation in Queensland were based on the unimproved value regardless of potential for industry or commerce or other purposes, the Government would find it hard to justify the retention of land tax.

Mr. Hiley: Why did you increase your collections of land tax so much in your last terms of office?

Mr. LLOYD: Because of the 1956 valuations.

Mr. Hiley: But your biggest increase was in 1952.

Mr. LLOYD: That is correct.

Mr. Hiley: You multiplied the collection nearly 3 to 1.

Mr. LLOYD: We did not have the position at that time where those on low incomes were being hit by increased valuations.

The Treasurer knows very well that between 1952 and 1960 there were increases in land values to an extent that created hardship to pensioners and many other people on lower incomes, and it became

necessary to have a complete revision of the valuation laws. Certainly in 1952 increased revenue was being received from land taxation, as increases in valuations brought within the scope of land taxation many people on lower incomes. It then became necessary, as it always does in such situations, not to rely on traditional methods but to take some more dramatic action.

Because of purchases of many large retail firms in the suburban area, the Gold Coast, and Redcliffe, and the competition for service station sites, there has been a great upsurge in land values, and a complete revision of the laws governing the valuation of land in Queensland became essential. These increases occurred mainly between 1951 and 1960, and the Treasurer cannot afford to allow this clumsy method of assessing land tax to continue. A complete lack of confidence in valuations is indicated, otherwise why reduce the increases in valuations by 50 per cent. and then add that figure to the previous valuation for land-tax purposes? If valuations are real valuations for that purpose, that should not be necessary.

Mr. Hiley: It could be a kindness. You are not suggesting that we should tax them on the full amount, are you?

Mr. LLOYD: No, I am certainly not suggesting that. What I am trying to make clear is that there should be a complete alteration in the system of valuing land in Queensland, which the Government has failed to have carried out. It has promised during the past two years to overhaul the laws dealing with valuation of land in Queensland, but this has not been done. Instead, it has perpetuated this clumsy method of overcoming anomalies affecting people on low incomes.

If the Treasurer is sincere in his attitude towards the imposition of land tax and his professed desire to prevent land aggregation, why does he not exempt from the payment of land tax all people who have land not aggregated or from whom there is no danger of land aggregation? That could quite easily be done if he were sincere in his attitude.

It is quite obvious to me that the Government is expecting additional revenue from the city of Brisbane. It is quite apparent that this financial year it intends to obtain revenue in excess of that received last year. If the legislation achieved what the Treasurer stated is its objective, that would not be the case. There is a graduated scale reducing from 10d. in the £1 in the top grade to 7½d. in the £1. The Treasurer said that the grades themselves would be lengthened. The hon. member for Bulimba mentioned that there was in the scale of charges a figure reaching 12½d. The figures go right through to a taxable value of £75,000, which has now been increased to £100,000 on the new scale. The whole thing is so very complicated that I wish the Treasurer had been more explicit,

not so much on the matter of the number of pence in the £1 but on the grades. He did mention that they will be lengthened.

Mr. Hiley: It is essential to avoid any inequalities in the steps in a progressive scale.

Mr. LLOYD: That is so, but on one portion of the taxable value the charge is 12½d. The hon. member for Bulimba made that point. The number of grades has been reduced to about seven in the higher gradings.

Let us look at the increased valuations. In the inner-city area of Brisbane, for instance, the average increase in values is about 60 to 80 per cent; in other parts of the city values have increased by from 200 to 250 per cent.

Mr. Hiley: What did you say the average was?

Mr. LLOYD: Between 60 per cent. and 100 per cent. in the inner-city area.

Mr. Hiley: Check your figures.

Mr. LLOYD: The announcement made by the Valuer-General indicated, I thought, that the average increase on previous valuations was about 100 per cent., or a little over. However, in other areas the increase was considerably higher, and many more people will be compelled to pay land tax because of the new valuations.

In 1953 an Australian Labour Party Government introduced legislation that made it possible for the Valuer-General to value on a residential basis land used only for residential purposes but zoned by the Brisbane City Council as industrial land. In 1956, in valuing land in suburban areas occupied by people operating small businesses, the Valuer-General made valuations on a basis comparable with that used for residential land. One allotment might have a shop on it, the next a residence, and each allotment was valued on a comparative scale at perhaps £400 or £500. But in 1961 the value of land on which small suburban businesses were situated increased phenomenally—in some instances from £400 to £5,000, or even £6,000—an increase of over 1,000 per cent. There are many people in this category in Brisbane, and they will be added to those who are now paying land tax. If there is an increase in the number of people paying land tax in the city of Brisbane and a reduction in the number of people outside Brisbane paying it, I cannot think how there will be an increase in revenue.

Mr. Hiley: Keep thinking; some day it will dawn on you.

Mr. LLOYD: Never mind about that. Taking an average figure, if a landowner's property valued at £1,600 increases to £4,800, which is the normal increase in certain areas, or to £4,000, regardless of the—

Mr. Hiley: What is that? Allotments valued at £4,800?

Mr. LLOYD: If an average of 180 per cent. increase—

Mr. Hiley: They will increase, you say, to £4,800?

Mr. LLOYD: To £4,000.

Mr. Hiley: From £1,600 to £4,800?

Mr. LLOYD: Yes, an aggregation of allotments.

Mr. Hiley: An aggregation?

Mr. LLOYD: Yes.

Mr. Hiley: You said "an average allotment".

Mr. LLOYD: All right—an aggregation of allotments held by one landholder. I was talking about those who pay land tax. The value of three allotments in one locality might previously have totalled £1,600 and been taxable to the extent of £2. Under the new valuations, with an increase of 200 per cent., the aggregate value would be £4,800, which would bring the landowner well within the scale of land tax, regardless of the Treasurer's formula. Many people will be in a similar position because, in the Treasurer's own reports, it is shown that in this category of the lower scales, at the end of 1960 there were about 8,300 land-tax payers, and I am convinced that many more in Brisbane will be brought into this category regardless of the Treasurer's formula. I cannot see how the Treasurer can avoid bringing more people in Brisbane within the ambit of land tax.

The Treasurer said that there would be a reduction of 550 in the number of land-tax payers this financial year compared with last year. If my argument that more people within the Brisbane area will be brought within the ambit of land tax is correct and there is, as the Treasurer says, an overall reduction of 550, the big reduction naturally must come from areas outside the Brisbane area. Unless the Treasurer can convince me otherwise, I cannot see how more people in Brisbane will not be brought within its ambit. Admittedly, outside of Brisbane there will be a reduction.

Mr. Hiley: There will be a considerable reduction everywhere.

Mr. LLOYD: The Treasurer says that 550 fewer people will be paying land tax this year.

Mr. Hiley: I will give you one clue. Sit down and work out what the big people pay, namely, the banks, the oil companies, the breweries and so on. Work that out and you have your answer.

Mr. LLOYD: The Treasurer has said that 550 fewer people will be paying land tax this year. This legislation covers the whole of Queensland, not only the Brisbane area. There is a reduction from 10d. to 7d. in the maximum rate on the larger land-owners. That is a considerable reduction in the rate.

Maybe it is a duplication of reduction in the higher tax field because valuations have not increased so much in that field as they have in the lower field of values. To my way of thinking, considerably more revenue would come from the middle of the scale, where there are so many values at between £10,000 and £20,000.

Mr. Hiley: Can I help you with this problem?

Mr. LLOYD: The amount of revenue—

Mr. Hiley: You are concerned where it is coming from?

Mr. LLOYD: I am certain that many more people will be paying land tax after the formula is introduced. The Treasurer stated that this is the first time that the new valuations will be used as a basis for the payment of land tax. That is the first point. He then said that 550 fewer people in Queensland would be paying land tax than last year. My point is that many more people in Brisbane will be paying land tax this year. I could eventually be proved wrong—and I sincerely hope that I am—but the revaluation in 1961 is to be the basis for assessment of land tax this year under the formula. Despite the statutory exemption on the new valuation, and despite the fact that it relieves some people in Brisbane from the payment of land tax, I feel that the new valuations will result in numbers of people in the lower valuations group, who did not contribute previously, being now brought within the ambit of the tax. There is not a great contribution from people in the lower valuations group. From taxable values of from £100 to £500 only £565 was collected as at the end of 1960, and there were only 365 taxpayers in that group.

Progress reported.

At 12 noon, in accordance with Standing Order No. 307, the House went into Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES— SIXTH AND SEVENTH ALLOTTED DAYS

(The Acting Chairman of Committees,
Mr. Gaven, South Coast, in the chair)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1963-64

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND INDUSTRY CHIEF OFFICE

Debate resumed from 29 October (see p. 1092) on Mr. Dewar's motion—

"That £381,778 be granted for 'Department of Labour and Industry—Chief Office'."

Mr. TOOTH (Ashgrove) (12.1 p.m.): I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister for Labour and Industry on his assumption of that very

important office. I have had the honour of knowing him for many years. Long before he entered Parliament we were colleagues on the political education committee of the party, to which we both belong. I have learned to respect him for his integrity, drive and energy. I am sure he will transfer the dynamic qualities he has shown in private and public life, and in this Chamber, into his duties as a Minister of the Crown. I wish him well in the occupancy of his office as a member of the Cabinet.

I take the opportunity also to refer to the work of his predecessor, the former Minister for Labour and Industry, Hon. K. J. Morris. I should like to comment on the sneering references to Mr. Morris's health that the Leader of the Opposition saw fit to make in opening the Opposition debate on these Estimates. On his retirement from this Parliament, Mr. Morris was in a state of physical and nervous exhaustion. Those of us who were close to him and knew him realised that. He had for six years carried a portfolio of very heavy responsibilities. During the time he was Minister I had the privilege of assisting him in those parts of his electorate that were contiguous to mine. I know from experience that he was never at home after 7.30 a.m.; it was quite useless ringing his home after that time in the morning. He rarely returned to his home before 7.30 p.m., and frequently not until quite a late hour. During the time he was in office, as a matter of tactics—I do not blame them for it—the A.L.P. elected to make him, as the Leader of the Liberal Party, their special target. They pursued that policy with unremitting determination and, quite frankly, on many occasions with malice and rancour. In addition to the physical and nervous exhaustion which Mr. Morris inevitably developed over the period during which he carried these heavy burdens, he also developed severe peptic ulceration.

These statements of mine are the answer to the doubts and queries of the Leader of the Opposition regarding the truth or otherwise of the statement that Mr. Morris retired in impaired health. He has indeed made a splendid recovery in the last year. I can satisfy the curiosity of the Leader of the Opposition about the doctors who have worked this miraculous improvement. Firstly, there is the relief from the burdens of office, because this is the first proper rest he has had in more than six years; secondly, there is his return to active outdoor life, the type of life to which he was always accustomed, thirdly, there is the use of a special type of treatment, imported from South Africa, that seems to have cured completely his peptic condition.

I have outlined these points in detail not merely to reply to the sneers of the Leader of the Opposition, but also to assure Mr. Morris's many friends and admirers of his complete return to health, and to indicate the Liberal Party's determination to remove

from the Senate the present representative, who has been so closely associated with left-wing ascendancy in Queensland.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. TOOTH: Hon. members opposite had to take the best of a bad lot; after all, they regarded him as second to Mr. Arnell. That was their view.

Of the several contributions to this debate which hon. members opposite have made up to the present, the most characteristic, I suppose, was made by the hon. member for South Brisbane. It was characteristic, first, for its irresponsibility; secondly, because of its abuse of privilege; and thirdly, for its demonstration not merely of political rancour, but also of personal rancour. The hon. member dealt at length with his favourite subject, the sins and negligences of the Police Force of Queensland, and his first complaint was that there are camps in the Police Force. There is nothing new in that. That is one of the major problems that this Government inherited from the A.L.P. Camps and factions existed in the Queensland Police Force long before the Nicklin Government came to office—long before! In a burst of rare candour, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition admitted this and he actually went to the extent of naming a former A.L.P. Premier as partly responsible for this situation.

The former Minister, Hon. K. J. Morris, was thoroughly aware of this problem when he assumed control of the Police Force in 1957. It is now an open secret that he believed that the Queensland Police Force was so faction-ridden that no senior officer of the force could have avoided entanglements, in some way, in this internecine strife, however much he may have tried to keep clear of it. Therefore, Mr. Morris strongly held the view that, when a new Commissioner had to be appointed, we should adopt the policy so successfully followed in Victoria and go outside the force, and, if necessary, outside the State, to secure a man entirely free of any association with the Queensland force and the factionalism and intrigue that he inherited from his A.L.P. predecessor in office—an A.L.P. Minister.

It is a matter of history that the Government as a whole, in its wisdom, did not agree with Mr. Morris. I can appreciate the difficulties that faced the Government, which desired to boost the morale of the force, desired to establish the principle that every constable has the Commissioner's baton in his knapsack, desired to avoid showing a lack of confidence in its local force, and hoped that an officer from within the service, with his special knowledge of the service, would have been able to pull things together. I do not say that the Government was wrong in its decision—I still have an open mind on the matter—and I think it is only fair to recognise that the problems and the difficulties that the

Government inherited in the Police Force were also inherited by the new Commissioner appointed at that time. I think that is something that should be constantly kept in mind. Also, in fairness I must say that, in my opinion, we are now reaching a point in time when we should be able to make a judgment on these matters in the light of what has transpired and what is transpiring.

The hon. member for South Brisbane had several other complaints against the Queensland police. What concerns me most is that, in the very same breath in which he besmirched the character of the Commissioner of Police and charged him with most infamous conduct, he also asserted that the Commissioner acted as a political agent for the Country-Liberal Government. I have no brief to defend the Commissioner of Police. That is an obligation that rests upon the Minister. It is an obligation that the Minister is in honour bound to undertake and a task he is in honour bound to perform, and he has done it. But I am concerned with the attempt by the member for South Brisbane to associate, and combine in one, a charge of encouraging a call-girl service and a charge of acting as a political agent of the Government. This was done with cold and calculated deliberation by the member as we sat here and watched him and listened to him and this is, of course, utterly contemptible—an utterly contemptible exercise on the part of the member for South Brisbane—and, let us be just and fair, it greatly embarrassed the members of the Opposition who were present in the Chamber and who were listening to him. His colleagues were obviously embarrassed.

This Opposition embarrassment was pointed up by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who followed Mr. Bennett, when, under a pretence of supporting his colleague, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition isolated only one of his many complaints. He discarded all the others, particularly the call-girl story, and he asserted on no fewer than five separate and distinct occasions in a few minutes that he, Mr. Lloyd, was—

Mr. BENNETT: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Ashgrove has referred to my conduct as contemptible. I wish to deny that, because he has seen a document that I have seen myself and I can produce an independent witness to say that, when the hon. member viewed the document, he said he himself was disgusted with the allegations that were contained therein and he gave a clear indication that he believed them and would take some action to make the position right. I ask him to withdraw the accusation because he himself, in the presence of this independent witness, said he would do something to have the situation corrected.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Ashgrove to accept the assurance of the hon. member for South Brisbane.

Mr. Bennett: And withdraw the statement.

Mr. TOOTH: What is his assurance, Mr. Gaven? If the hon. member wishes me to accept, and you direct that I accept, an assurance that his behaviour is not utterly contemptible, I have no option but to defer to the Chair. But I will go further at this stage and say that he has now been guilty of a gross breach of confidence. I have seen a certain document but I have not expressed any views on it. I have completely suspended judgment. I am waiting on events. And I am scandalised that this member should have so breached an obvious confidence, because I am quite certain that the person who told him this has given him no authority whatsoever to reveal the fact that I have seen any such document.

Now what I assert is contemptible is the attempt by the member for South Brisbane to associate in one accusation a charge against the Commissioner of encouraging a call-girl service and a charge that he was a political agent of the Liberal and Country Parties. I say that that is a contemptible assault upon the good name and reputation of both parties on this side of the Chamber, and I think he should be ashamed of himself. I think that hon. members with him must feel very embarrassed indeed.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was obviously embarrassed because when he rose, ostensibly to support the hon. member for South Brisbane, he isolated only one of his many complaints and discarded all the others, particularly the call-girl story, upon which I had no information and no evidence. So that there will be no misunderstanding about it, the document referred to by the hon. member has no reference whatever to it, either. The document that I have seen has no reference to his latest charge.

Whilst the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was speaking, he was at pains to mention, on five separate occasions in the course of a few minutes, that he was making a "reasonable" and "responsible" statement. This he emphasised, obviously implying contradistinction to the irresponsibility of the hon. member for South Brisbane.

Mr. Bennett: Tell me what document you have seen.

Mr. TOOTH: The hon. member knows very well that I am not likely to breach confidence in the way that he has done.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for South Brisbane had 25 minutes in which to make his speech, and I ask him to allow the hon. member for Ashgrove to reply.

Mr. TOOTH: The point that I have made concerning the obvious embarrassment of the Opposition was further demonstrated by the fact that the Leader of the Opposition himself came in and entered the debate by interjection while the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was speaking. He obviously indicated by his attitude that he also felt that the Deputy Leader was speaking on this

one subject only as a responsible and reasonable representative of the Opposition. The irresponsibility of the hon. member for South Brisbane cannot, however, justify our ignoring his definite and categorical charge against the Commissioner and his colleagues of encouraging—I ask that that word be noted—a call-girl service at the National Hotel. I trust that the Government will seek from the hon. member for South Brisbane the evidence upon which he bases this damaging assertion.

As to the charge that the Commissioner was a political agent of the Government, this is unsupported by any evidence. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has admitted categorically that he had no direct evidence. Mr. Bischof is entitled to his own political opinions and he is also entitled to propagate them in his own time and in his private capacity. He has, however, no right or authority to do so in his official capacity—and there is no evidence that he does.

I am sure that I speak for the entire Cabinet when I say that this Government will never condone a situation similar to that which existed under Labour Governments whereby State school inspectors such as the late Mr. F. P. Baker were allowed to organise their districts politically and thus enter Parliament. That was a widespread practice.

Mr. Bennett: What about the Q.L.P. man at Maryborough?

Mr. TOOTH: The hon. member knows all about that. He has made many complaints, most of which appear to be unsupported by any reliable evidence. In concluding, I wish to say that they appear to be as unfounded as his recent charges that party-political literature is circulating in certain independent schools. This literature comes into my home, and I want to say that the only party that I have seen attacked in it is the Communist Party.

Mr. WALSH: (Bundaberg) (12.20 p.m.): The hon. member for Hawthorne has just said that I have saved the day. It is just as well that I did get the call, because somewhere along the line there appears to have been a unity pact to exclude me from this debate. I thank the hon. member for Brisbane for giving way to me.

Mr. DAVIES: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Bundaberg has made a statement that is not correct. The hon. member was asked to speak on Tuesday night, the second day of this debate, and he refused. The debate would have collapsed at 8.30 p.m. had not A.L.P. speakers carried it on. The hon. member mentioned that he would speak this morning, but he was not present in the Chamber and speakers were arranged from those available. He would have been added to the list if he had reported his arrival.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! there is no point of order.

Mr. WALSH: The remarks of the hon. member for Maryborough only add to the evidence that there was a plot. I did tell the hon. member for Maryborough and the hon. member for Callide, the Government Whip, that I would speak on Thursday.

Mr. Davies: Why should you pick your time?

Mr. WALSH: I can pick my time, just as the hon. member allows members of his party to pick their time. He is not going to regiment me in this Chamber. There were no speakers available, and he wanted the hon. member for Cook or me to fill the gap.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. WALSH: I cannot waste very much time complaining now that I have received the call, but there it is. There was a deliberate attempt to keep me out of the debate.

Mr. Davies: What rubbish!

Mr. WALSH: It is not rubbish. I have just complained to the Premier about it.

Mr. Mann: You have the call now; away you go.

Mr. WALSH: Thank you. I think it is necessary now, as I have received the call, to go a little further than I expected to go.

Members of the Australian Labour Party have described this department as a department of bits and pieces. Their description was probably intended to have a go at the Minister, because I do not think that they would suggest seriously that the Department of Labour and Industry is unimportant. I certainly do not think it is, nor do I think that the Minister committed any offence, as some hon. members have suggested, by reading from submissions prepared for him. Each department prepares submissions for the Minister's use, and I suppose that every Minister of the Crown, including myself, has at some time carefully read written submissions when introducing his Estimates. It is a right and proper thing to do. Of course, after I had got away from what might be described as the formal approach to the introduction of Estimates, I entered into whatever controversial issues might arise, and I think that the Minister proved on Tuesday evening that he is capable of doing that.

Many activities of departments controlled by the Minister for Labour and Industry affect the security of home life and the welfare of the family, and that is why, in my opinion, it ranks second to the Department of Health in this field of Government administration. When one realises how many phases of family life are covered by the State Children Department, one appreciates the need for officers to be trained in handling the various domestic issues that arise, and also the need for a sympathetic approach to the problems that confront them.

I pay tribute to the officers of the State Children Department for the way in which they are performing their task of looking after the welfare of State Children. Unfortunately, I cannot pay a similar tribute to officers whose duty it is to obtain reports on behalf of the State Children Department when its own officers are not readily available. In that connection I point out that I am referring to police reports. I do not want to delve into this question, but I do want to instance the case of two brothers, one a sergeant and one a constable, and the circumstances that arose in a certain adoption case. It was not until the case was pressed by me following information that I received from Mount Isa that the department sent its own officer out to investigate the position and overcome the objections that were raised in the police reports, objections that could not be justified at any stage.

I think the Minister will make a success of this phase of his administration; that he will approach it with sympathy and sentiment because of his long association with another organisation, namely, that dealing with care of spastic people. But I must warn him at this stage, early in his career, not to become too enthusiastic too soon about some other phases of his administration and not to disregard allegations that are made in this Chamber by any member of any party, particularly those that relate to the administration of the Police Force.

It may be that the other day the Minister felt he had some obligation to defend the officers of the Police Department, and he did so; but I put it to him that the mere denial by the party who has been charged of the allegations that have been made from time to time is not, in itself, necessarily justification for saying that the charges are not well-founded.

Mr. Dewar: You would agree that the charges should be based on fact.

Mr. WALSH: I do, and I generally do not like making a charge unless it is based on fact.

The Minister will agree that if that procedure was followed by courts there would be a terrific number of acquittals, because so many people who are charged deny the charge. If a magistrate simply accepted a denial and brushed the matter off, obviously justice would not be done in the community.

Mr. Dewar: The prosecution must supply the facts.

Mr. WALSH: The Minister will find as he goes along—as I have found after many years of ministerial experience—that he will have to make his own inquiries into many matters, particularly the administration of the Police Department. I am not here to justify anything that the hon. member for South Brisbane said. Probably, if there is any complaint against him—and it is not a real complaint—it is that he presents his case

somewhat aggressively and sometimes with perhaps a taint of vindictiveness. Some even say that about me at times; but that is the nature of the hon. member for South Brisbane, and if it is not acceptable to other members of the Committee, that cannot be helped. But the Minister cannot just brush aside lightly charges that have been made, nor do I accept the Minister's quotation of Rule 88 of the Police Act in justification of the denial that there is differential and discriminatory treatment in imposing penalties on various members of the Police Force. The rule quoted by the Minister is the general rule that gives power to the Commissioner to inflict penalties under the various headings, but surely not differential treatment to the extent that it has been applied for similar offences.

While I have it in mind, I want to refer to the McNicholl case. It is for this Government to tell the community why Inspector McNicholl was able to receive a commission. I know of no previous Commissioner who would have recommended him for commissioned office, nor do I know of any Government—I was associated with the previous one for a long time—that would have accepted such a recommendation had it been made to it. Whatever the reasons were for appointing him to commissioned rank—that is one for the Government to tell the story. Did not all the reported material on the McNicholl case justify some punishment? How can we expect the rank and file to look up to, and respect, the Police Force if they see that people in the upper strata are dealt with in the manner in which Ben McNicholl was dealt with? Does the Government want to hide something, or does someone want to hide something? Why not have charged him and allowed him to go before the appeal board, the right of appeal having been given by this Government to commissioned officers? I do not agree with that—not even now—and I say so. Seeing that it is available, why not let him exercise that right of appeal, and let the appeal board determine whether or not there was justification for his suspension and ultimate dismissal?

I come now to a more serious matter. It is getting to a serious state of affairs when the Full Court of Queensland publicly declares from the bench that a fraud has been committed on the court. What is the answer? Immediately, a departmental investigation is set in train. To do what? To prove that the court was wrong and the police were right?

Mr. Bennett: It was a unanimous decision of the Full Court, too.

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member for South Brisbane would know that I have my facts fairly accurate. I draw attention particularly to the remarks of Mr. Justice Hart, a former member of this Parliament. Despite the soothing way in which Mr. Justice Stanley passed it over—with enough inference in it, of course—Mr. Justice Hart expressed the

opinion that he did not think it was reckless; that he thought it was intentional. Yet nothing is being done to that particular officer. I have no interest in him personally, but I am suggesting that that is not the way to build up the confidence of the lower strata of the Police Force in this State. Any other person in the community would have been charged under the relevant section of the Criminal Code for interfering with the course of justice. Now we have an investigation going on after the court, comprising three judges, had examined all the matter presented before it, and had made the specific statement that it was a fraud on the court.

This is a very serious position, and I am surprised that the Government has not taken some action in this matter. If the community gets the idea into their heads that a police officer, wherever he may be wrong, is to be let out the back door and not be subject to the consequences of the law, it will be a bad day for the administration of justice, of law and order, in this State. The sooner we get away from these things, which suggest that people are being covered up here and there, the better it will be for the community and the State as a whole.

I will not waste my time replying to charges made by hon. members opposite about the state of affairs in the Police Force during my time as a Minister. However, I can say that I have never placed myself in such a compromising position that I am unable to attack the police, and that is extremely important. There should be no suspicion at any time that a police officer can escape the consequences of the law. I go further and say that the Commissioner, in the administration of his office, should not show favouritism for one officer against another.

I have heard complaints from the other side about attacks by the hon. member for South Brisbane on the Commissioner. When I heard attacks from the other side some years ago, in 1960, when the learned legal gentleman not now in this Chamber attacked Jim Donovan, whose career, honesty and integrity could not be questioned, I did not hear anyone over there protest—not at all! When I say that there should not be any favouritism, I remember that I previously made a remark in this Chamber about the appointment of a number of officers to commissioned rank. I am at a loss to know how some men mentioned in the list, of whom I have some knowledge, could be promoted above other people. I am equally at a loss to know how Ben McNicholl got there. There is any amount of good material in the force. Promotions should be made without consideration for the type who will be bludging on the force and on the community. Those may be hard terms, but nonetheless they are true.

Again, promotions of preferred policemen cannot be justified. Here I am referring to the preference that appears to be given to

various police officers at different times, not because they have any special qualities. After all, it should not be forgotten that I have administered the affairs of the Police Force at different times. I can never understand how a man such as Buchanan should have to go to Bundaberg when a senior man was there, a man qualified to undertake that particular investigation. Someone wanted to uphold Buchanan as an expert in this and that—he may be an expert in many things—but the man who was there was fully qualified. When the promotions came out Buchanan was promoted over this man who was senior to him, but to prevent any appeal both were promoted. That is not the way to handle these matters. There should be no ground for suspicion that any officer in the Police Force is able to blackmail his way to promotion.

The hon. member for Ashgrove can wave his arms and beat about the bush on the suggestion concerning certain licensed premises. Everyone has heard what has been going on at those premises. I can assure the Minister that I should not expect him to know because I should be more likely to see him up against a lemonade bar, or something like that. However, I do know that there are many people who really know and, believe me, they are not all in Parliament either. It is just too bad if the Commissioner has denied to the Minister that these things have been happening in that hotel when there is such an abundance of public evidence that they have. Even the dogs are barking it, and have been for a long time. I repeat that this is a bad principle. I do not want to have extended to Bundaberg any concessions whose application to other centres cannot be justified.

When I went to make some inquiries about what was happening on Anzac Day, I was told by the local senior sergeant that the shutters were up, and they were. That is the way I would want it. When the police say the places are to be closed, that is the way I would want it. But I have some objection when I find that, in other parts of the same police district, someone here and there is allowed to have a drink. I object to that and I hope the Commissioner will see to it that, if there is to be any policy on the matter by inspectors in any part of Queensland, it will be a uniform policy. Either close them down or let them go.

There have been certain references here from time to time and they have been made again by the hon. member for South Brisbane. I say emphatically that, as far as I am concerned, the private life of any departmental officer has nothing to do with the Parliament until it reaches a stage where his decisions or his actions become compromised or corrupted by virtue of the way he lives. Let there be no misunderstanding on that. If any part of the allegations of the hon. member for South Brisbane can be justified on the basis that decisions made by the Commissioner are related to the other

allegations, then it becomes part and parcel of the consideration of this Parliament. But do not let us bring the other things in if they cannot be related. If they can, let nobody in this Chamber throw up his arms and say, "Those are things we cannot deal with."

Now that the Premier has entered the Chamber he can confirm that I complained to him, but, thanks to the hon. member for Brisbane, I was able to get on my feet—and I greatly appreciate his generosity in allowing me to get on my feet, I can assure you. As one who has been 28 years in this Assembly and who was a Minister for so long. I want to complain at being denied, by an arrangement somewhere along the line, the right to speak. I can name two or three members whose names have been put on the list of speakers since I first announced my intention to speak. I hope I have not said anything that I could not justify or anything that would be regarded as a personal reflection; but nobody in this Parliament is ever going to prevent me, nor has anyone at any time, from exercising my right to draw attention to any corrupt administration, or any form of administration that cannot be justified in the public interest, and I resent, and bitterly resent, any attempt to prevent me from getting on my feet. I know I could have got up and put on a scene with the Chairman. I could have risen three times, four times, five times, and he would probably, in conformity with this silly rule that applies, fail to give the call to the member rising to speak. It gets to an absurdity when I put my name down last Tuesday and then the machine goes to work to keep me from speaking.

(Time expired.)

Mr. MANN (Brisbane): Mr. Hodges—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hodges): The hon. member for Albert!

Mr. CAREY (Albert) (12.45 p.m.): It is with pleasure—

Mr. DAVIES: I rise to a point of order. There was a definite arrangement between the Whips this morning—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Albert.

Mr. DAVIES: This matter of an hon. member's name being crossed off the list—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Albert.

Mr. MANN: If you are going to try to do to me what the Whips did to the hon. member for Bundaberg, I shall keep you sitting here till 10 o'clock tonight.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MANN: I am taking a point of order, and I tell you that you are not going to browbeat me. An arrangement was made for me to follow the hon. member for Ashgrove. I accepted that arrangement. I was

making a note when the hon. member's speech collapsed and he sat down, and then the hon. member for Bundaberg rose. I am pointing out that I am entitled to speak when my turn comes.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The list before me shows that the name of the hon. member for Brisbane has been crossed off.

Mr. MANN: Who crossed it off?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I do not know who crossed it off. I am explaining that the list before me now shows the name of the hon. member for Albert. He was called and he will now speak.

Mr. Davies: I think we should know who crossed it off.

Opposition Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the hon. members for Brisbane and South Brisbane that continual interjecting is disorderly conduct and I shall deal with them under Standing Order 123A if it continues.

Mr. MANN: You say that my name is crossed off the list. You, as Chairman, should know who crossed it off, and I ask who crossed it off.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Albert.

Mr. Bennett: What a dirty trick.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! That remark is a reflection on the Chair and I ask the hon. member for South Brisbane to apologise to the Chair.

Mr. Bennett: If you insist, but I cannot help expressing my feelings.

Mr. HANLON: I rise to a point of order.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for South Brisbane to apologise to the Chair.

Mr. Bennett: I apologise. Anything else you want done?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for South Brisbane is guilty of disorderly conduct and, under the powers vested in me under Standing Order 123A, I ask him to withdraw immediately from the Chamber.

(The hon. member for South Brisbane withdrew from the Chamber.)

Mr. Mann: We will all withdraw. Come on, let's get out.

Mr. CAREY: To continue my speech, it is with pleasure that I rise to join previous speakers on the Government side in congratulating the Minister on the presentation of his Estimates. There has been some criticism of the Minister's reading from a prepared script. I think that is quite a good

idea for a Minister whose portfolio covers such a wide field. Reading from a prepared document enables him to give the substance of his Estimates without any of the packing that naturally enters a speech delivered from notes only.

I am one of those people who admire the ability of the Hon. A. T. Dewar. We know that his is a very comprehensive and demanding portfolio. I am confident that his energy, enthusiasm, and fairness will stand him in good stead, and I have no reason to doubt that he will be able to handle any situation that confronts him as the Minister in charge of the Department of Labour and Industry.

As I represent portion of an area that is a great tourist magnet for people throughout Australia and other parts of the world, it is natural that I shall speak mainly on that part of the Estimates dealing with tourism. I should like to take this opportunity of congratulating the Director-General of the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau, Mr. Joe Wilson, on his excellent report. It is very comprehensive and covers all fields of the Bureau's operations, showing that he and his officers are alert and alive to their responsibilities in promoting tourism in our beautiful State. They are always prepared to assist private enterprise to play its part in attracting tourists to Queensland.

I am pleased to see that Mr. Wilson's report indicates that he and his officers are aware of the importance of conferences, sporting carnivals and organised tours in attracting tourists and inducing them to travel throughout the State. Those of us who live on the Gold Coast and enjoy its wonderful climate are very appreciative of the assistance given by the Tourist Bureau in local committees in the promotion of various carnivals, including the Gold Coast Winter Bowls Carnival. The report shows that this carnival attracted about 1,200 entries, and no doubt many of the players brought their wives and families with them to enjoy the Gold Coast's many tourist attractions. It is estimated that each bowler spent approximately £80 during his stay in the area, and if my arithmetic is correct—I am sure it is—this means that £96,000 circulated in the area during that one carnival. The people of the Gold Coast, particularly those in the area that I represent, play an important part in attracting people to the various sporting carnivals and festivals by contributing money and trophies. A galaxy of sport is now being conducted and many people are competing for various trophies and championship sashes. It has brought many visitors to the Gold Coast. I should also like to see wider publicity given to the racing carnival that was held for the first time this year by the Southport Race Club. The latest event on our list is the visit of the South African cricket team on 4 December. Advertising can be done anywhere, and I think it is only right that I should record this in "Hansard" in the hope that parliamentarians and their

friends might take the opportunity of seeing the many wonderful features of the Gold Coast and the excellent cricketers down there, who no doubt will defeat the South Africans.

It is very pleasing to read in the report of the Director-General that collections through his office last year amounted to £1,954,822—virtually £2,000,000—which was an increase of £61,864 on the figure for the previous year. In presenting his Estimates, the Minister told us that for the first three months of this financial year the collections are already £90,000 above those for the corresponding three months last year. He said also that £57,000 is to be spent on publicity and advertising to further the work of the Tourist Bureau.

Mr. Dewar: £56,000.

Mr. CAREY: It is near enough to £57,000, but I thank the Minister for his correction.

That is only the amount that has been allocated for the specific purpose of publicity and advertising; but every Tourist Bureau office in every State of the Commonwealth, every other thing that is done and every other £1 that is spent by the department, even if it is spent in wages and salaries, in my humble opinion adds to the advertising of this industry in our State. So I should say that we obtain much more for publicising this industry than appears in the Estimates.

Mr. Dewar: We get substantial publicity through A.N.T.A.

Mr. CAREY: I thank the Minister. In an industry as important as this one, next year we might hope to see £100,000 set aside for special advertising and publicity.

I should like to say that the Government generally is playing a wonderful part in developing our natural resources for the enjoyment of interstate tourists. Nature has endowed Queensland, probably because of its tropical location, with many tourist attractions; but it is not much good having these attractions if the Government is not prepared to develop roads and other facilities to enable tourists to have easy access to them. I compliment the Minister for Mines and Main Roads on the wonderful job he has done for this State in the period that roads and development have been under his administration.

On the Gold Coast today, as always because it is natural, we have sand, surf, sun, and safe waters. Those are the attractions that naturally any holidaying family or any person who may be resident in the cold southern States would want to have. Then we have the Barrier Reef, and I am particularly pleased to mention this because my colleague and friend, the hon. member for Whitsunday, Mr. Ron. Camm, was a little concerned that I would forget that there ever were Whitsunday Islands, a Whitsunday Passage or a Barrier Reef. It is a wonderful attraction and I do not want to detract from any other

resort. I simply say that the best is the Gold Coast; the others are secondary. We will be happy to receive the tourists as they come over the border, give them all they want—of course, take the first few shillings out of their pockets—and then let them go to North Queensland to enjoy all the attractions in this State.

Mr. Nicklin: What about the Sun Coast?

Mr. CAREY: I am pleased the Premier asked me that question. There is a very friendly competitive spirit between the Sun Coast and the Gold Coast, but when reading the report I counted the number of times each was mentioned. The Sun Coast was mentioned very many times while the Gold Coast was referred to only twice. I did not intend to criticise the Tourist Bureau but the Premier opened up the opportunity.

The tropical scenery in the Gold Coast hinterland is something that all who live in this State should see in order to realise how important it is to visitors. Our coastal freshwater streams, I think, are among the prettiest and most pleasant in the Commonwealth, and I should like to suggest, as I did in my speech during the Address-in-Reply debate, that a policy be pursued whereby the Forestry Department, or whatever department might handle such affairs, could establish parking areas and toilet facilities on these streams so that our coastal dwellers might travel at week-ends into the country and enjoy the pleasant conditions that exist there.

Earlier I told the Committee of the wonderful job of work the Minister for Mines and Main Roads has done in providing the State with good roads so that tourists can travel widely to see the natural beauty we have to offer. People have always wanted to travel the length and breadth of this State. This Government, of course, has helped them to do that by providing a bitumen road all the way from Cairns to Coolangatta. A four-lane highway from Brisbane to the border is fast approaching completion, and access roads are in particularly good order. All this has given everybody an opportunity to travel around our State. People down here want to see the North; northern people want to come down to the Gold Coast.

I should like to suggest that the Minister in charge of the Tourist Bureau seek the co-operation of the Minister for Mines and Main Roads, who looks after the State so well, in completing the bitumen surfacing of the "Do-it-yourself" road from Oxenford to Tamborine. Money could be well spent on the road from the mountain down to Canungra so that tourists could do the round trip. At present the road from Tamborine Mountain down to Canungra is known as "The Goat Track".

As the Minister in charge of the Department of Harbours and Marine, the Treasurer has done a wonderful job of work on the Gold Coast. He has assisted us in beautifying the Broadwater and making it more readily usable by launches drawing 3 feet,

4 feet and 5 feet of water. Southport has something that is a little unique. The Broadwater is the calmest, safest and most delightful inland waterway in the State, indeed, perhaps on the east coast of Australia. It is known by thousands. The Minister has done a remarkable job with beaconing and channel-dredging, and generally assisting the tourist industry. I should like to suggest to the Minister for Labour and Industry that perhaps he might be able to get the Treasurer to give consideration to erecting place-name signs so that the travelling public on motor launches would know that they were about to enter the Logan River, the Coomera River, the Coombabah River, or Tippler's Passage. If we can afford to put name signs on roads I am sure we can afford to put name signs on our waters.

I should also like to suggest the establishment of picnic areas on South Stradbroke Island. People in that area are very anxious to see South Stradbroke Island retained as a national park. At very little cost grass and trees could be planted and picnic areas established. I hope that the Minister for tourism will see if his colleagues will give consideration to that request.

Over the past few years we have had an influx of high-powered and, for that matter, low-powered, water-craft which are towed on trailers behind cars. This has become a very important part of our way of life. Tourists want facilities that will help them in the quick launching of their craft. The Department of Harbours and Marine has provided many launching ramps but, as with everything else, we can always do with more. I suppose that as long as we live we will look for more and better facilities. The Government is doing everything in its power to attract as many tourists as possible to Queensland. Water ski-ing, of course, has become a very popular sport and its popularity is daily increasing, but we must provide new ski-ing areas. This may necessitate dredging, but we have wonderful God-given natural resources and it is up to us to develop them. Private enterprise has well and truly played its part in my area, but it is essential for the Government to give continuing encouragement to private enterprise.

Boat-hiring has become big business on the coast and it is pleasing to note that the Treasurer has attended to all the jetties in the area and is building the new Imperial Jetty in concrete and steel, at a cost of £5,000.

When we talk about tourists we are a little inclined to think that they come only from Melbourne and Sydney and that, after travelling thousands of miles, they stay in one place for a day or two and then move on. On the Gold Coast we are happy to have the fellow who comes there for the day, as well as the fellow who comes with his family for a week's holiday or three weeks' holiday, or whatever period he may like to spend with us.

Mr. Hanlon: Why did you chase the campers away from Burleigh and the other places?

Mr. CAREY: Burleigh is not in my area, so that I am not prepared to discuss that matter with the hon. member.

I am confident that any guest who comes to our area will be well received and looked after particularly well. I think I know a little about selling. If I bought the Labour Party at my price and sold it at its price I am sure I would make a fortune. However, when one is selling anything it is a good idea to give the customer what he wants, and he must get it as conveniently as possible. When selling anything it is important to have good, efficient staff, with pleasant personalities, to attend to customers and make them welcome. The task of promoting tourism is not solely one for the Government. Private enterprise, too, has a responsibility. Hon. members may remember that, in my maiden speech in this Chamber, I said that the staffs in Southport shops were most efficient and courteous, and at all times gave pleasant service to customers.

Mr. Thackeray: Do you agree with the establishment of a casino on the Gold Coast?

Mr. CAREY: That is a very good point. However, the hon. member must realise that I represent the electorate of Albert. Under no circumstances would the people in my electorate tolerate the establishment of a casino in Albert. They are opposed to it. I am here as their representative, and as their representative I will do what they want. I am sure that a casino will never be established in the electorate of Albert. It has been said that Chevron Island and the Isle of Capri would be suitable sites for establishing a casino. I assure hon. members that the highest class residential areas on the coast are to be found on those two islands, and that a casino will never be established there.

I recently had the pleasure of visiting Melbourne and I called on the Queensland Tourist Bureau in that city. I pay a compliment to the staff for the way they received me. They did so in a spirit of true Queensland friendship. The internal workings of the Bureau are excellent, but the external appearance of the building in which it is housed—and I am certain the Minister agrees with me—is quite inappropriate for selling sunshine for a State as magnificent as Queensland. It is dingy and dark. I am confident that, now that I have mentioned the matter, the Minister will act to remedy the defect as early as possible.

During this debate there has been a good deal of criticism of the police. A tourist resort requires tolerant police officers and officials, but they must be firm and they must have control. The police officers on the Gold Coast, under the supervision of Sub-Inspector Tom Codd and Senior Sergeant Bert Melksham do an excellent job. I do not believe you could find anyone who would

complain about the service they give on the Gold Coast. They must be able to deal with any situation. One naturally expects from time to time an influx of undesirables from across the border but they are not here very long before the police send them back to where they came from. So I assure the Committee that we are very happy with the police we have down there. We could do with a few more but so could many other districts.

Finally, I want to pay a tribute to Mr. Charles Clark, Director of the State Children Department. I think he is a very humane man. He has a perfect understanding of personal human rights. Recently I had cause to call on him about a family. I have not the time to enlarge on the matter now; but the deserted wife in this case was in real strife and he looked after her in his usual humane way and to my entire satisfaction.

(Time expired.)

Mr. MANN (Brisbane) (2.26 p.m.): Mr. Gaven—

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MANN: Before the luncheon adjournment there was an interlude in which I challenged the action of the Temporary Chairman, Mr. Hodges, when he refused to give me the call and gave it instead to the member for Albert.

A Government Member: Very discourteous.

Mr. MANN: It was not discourteous. I draw your attention to the fact that there has been an agreement between the Whips of this Assembly by which a list is supplied to the Chairman of Committees or to the Speaker.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. gentleman to get onto the Estimates. I am not interested in shirt-tail agreements between Whips. The hon. member who jumps to his feet will get my call at all times.

Mr. MANN: I am very glad you have told me that, Mr. Gaven, because from now on we will not accept the agreement. It has been a gentlemen's agreement between the Opposition and the Government.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! A shirt-tail agreement!

Mr. MANN: It has not been a shirt-tail agreement at all. I resent your saying that.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark.

Mr. MANN: What you have said is an insult to the Whips.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw the remark.

Mr. MANN: I will withdraw it because I know you have the whip hand on me and I have to withdraw it under Standing Orders.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. DAVIES: I rise to a point of order. Even though the remark came from you, Mr. Gaven, I suggest it is not in order to refer to us as having shirt-tail arrangements.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MANN: Now we know the position. It is no good the Minister laughing like a hyena over there. Prior to today there was a gentlemen's agreement and we accepted it. However, I will go on with my speech.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I will say, for the information of the hon. gentleman, that his name was on the list and when the hon. member for Ashgrove resumed his seat I looked at the hon. member for Brisbane expecting him to indicate that he wanted the call. He did not rise to his feet; he did not even look in my direction. The hon. member for Bundaberg rose to his feet and called, "Mr. Chairman!" He remained there for five seconds and I looked again to the hon. member for Brisbane but he did not rise or look towards me. That is the position. I hope what I have said will suffice. The whole matter is now closed and I ask the hon. member for Brisbane to get on with the Estimates before the Committee.

Mr. MANN: I hope it was not an attempt to stop me from speaking because of any fear that I was going to attack the police in this debate. I have no intention of doing that.

I note in the Auditor-General's report the figure of £35,000 for salaries of the Industrial Court and Commission. Travelling expenses and other incidentals amount to £10,000, which I think is rather high, and I should like the Minister to explain how that sum was arrived at. It appears to me that the Commissioners, who receive high emoluments, also receive very high expenses. Against that, this Government altered the industrial law applying to bonus payments and cost-of-living adjustments, and I feel that that has in some way affected the judgment of the Industrial Commission. In altering the provisions of the Act applying to bonus payments and cost-of-living adjustments, the Government in some way indirectly influenced the Commission in a way that the Government wanted.

Mr. Windsor: That is reflection on the Commission.

Mr. MANN: You can do what you like about it, but this was done by your Government.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. MANN: Through you, Mr. Gaven, I inform the hon. member for Ithaca that this was done by a Bill introduced by the former Minister, Mr. Morris, who is now a Senate candidate. The amending legislation directed

the Commission not to fix bonus payments on the prosperity of industry, but gave the Commission power to reduce bonuses if it so desired. That cannot be denied.

There is a strong rumour in union circles that a large handout was given to the slush fund of the Liberal Party, of which Mr. Morris was the leader, by the directors of the North Queensland brewery. The Minister is new to his portfolio and was not responsible for that legislation, but if he wants to do the right thing by the workers of this State he will immediately advise the Government to amend the Act to provide for the awarding of prosperity bonuses and cost-of-living adjustments.

Western Australia, New South Wales, and Queensland are the only three States of the Commonwealth that function on the "C" Series Index. No longer do Queensland workers have cost-of-living adjustments automatically applied to them; they have to apply to the Commission for them. The only State in the Commonwealth where cost-of-living adjustments are automatic is New South Wales.

Mr. Thackeray: Under a Labour Government.

Mr. MANN: Yes, under a Labour Government, but this Government has taken that benefit away from the workers. I ask the Minister to examine this matter and restore the position to what it was under the Labour Government, when cost-of-living adjustments were granted automatically without application.

Mr. Windsor: They can automatically reduce them, when we don't.

Mr. MANN: There is no point in the hon. member's talking about it because he knows nothing about it. He put his hand up to support the amendment that took away prosperity bonuses. He cannot deny that. It is known throughout the State that the Government yielded to pressure from pastoralists, big industrialists, and commercial interests. We know that it yielded to similar pressure when dealing with the State Transport Act. It is reported in union circles today that there was a conference on prosperity loadings between Mr. Morris, who is now a prospective Senate candidate, the Premier, and directors of the North Queensland brewery. They cannot deny that. For many years, under Labour Governments, Queensland was able to boast that it had the lowest cost of living and the highest basic wage. Today Queensland is a low-wage State because of the policy of the Country-Liberal Government. When Labour was in office, the Industrial Court was bound to hear disputes despite the fact that parties to them were on strike.

Mr. Ewan: What about the shearers' strike?

Mr. Knox: What about the secret ballot legislation that you introduced?

Mr. MANN: I will speak about those things later. At the moment I am speaking about the attitude of the Industrial Commission. As a result of the action taken by this Government, the Commission will not hear a complaint or an application from a union if there is a strike in any part of an industry, even though only a handful of men in one section may be involved. Under Labour, the Court was obliged to hear a dispute or an application; but the amendment of the Act brought down by this Government, which prevents a union from approaching the Commission even if only half a dozen men are on strike, has resulted in many thousands of workers being ostracised.

Mr. Ewan: Why didn't they hear the shearers under a Labour Government?

Mr. MANN: I say to the hon. member through you, Mr. Gaven, that I am pointing out the weaknesses of the legislation introduced by a Country-Liberal Government. Section 11 (6) of the Act provides that a Commissioner may refuse to hear an application if any members of the union concerned in the application are involved in a dispute or refuse to work in accordance with the relevant award. Their case might be genuine; they might have a genuine grievance and go on strike in a section of a workshop. If the union of which they are members is before the Commission applying for a wage increase, it cannot be heard. That shows the attitude of the Government to industrial matters, and, as I said earlier, it means that thousands of workers can be ostracised.

Mr. Windsor: In other words, they prejudice their claim by their own foolishness.

Mr. MANN: If they are as foolish as the hon. member, I should hate to have anything to do with them. I do not know how he ever came to be elected to this Assembly.

I repeat: the legislation brought down by Mr. Morris when he was Minister for Labour and Industry took away from the Commission the right to grant a bonus payment but allowed it to decrease it or refuse it altogether. I say that is an indictment on the Government. My colleague the hon. member for Cairns suggested that the Minister might adopt an approach to industrial matters different from that of his predecessor in office. I have my doubts about that because members of the Liberal Party are all tarred with the one brush; but I think it is a suggestion that should be considered not only by the Minister but also by the Government in fairness to workers and to give them social justice and adequate wages and good conditions. If there is prosperity in a particular industry, workers are entitled to a prosperity loading. When figures are issued showing that the cost of living has increased, the Commission should

be able, as the Court could under Labour, to give the workers their just dues immediately.

Mr. Ewan interjected.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member for Roma might know something about prickly pear selections, but knows nothing about industrial matters.

Mr. Ewan: I am asking you, as a former Speaker of this Chamber, a question.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member will never be Speaker of this Chamber, nor will he ever be a Minister.

I wish to deal now with apprenticeship. I believe that there should be a complete overhaul of the apprenticeship system, and the Government should see that a thorough inquiry is made into it. Today we hear employers crying out that there is a shortage of skilled tradesmen. A young man can now join the Police Force and, at the age of 19 years, become fully qualified and receive £1,000 a year. Another young man can join the teaching service and, having graduated at the age of 19 years, can receive £1,000 a year. Another young fellow may be a truck-driver and at the age of 19 he will get senior truck-driver's wages. On the other hand, lads who have entered an apprenticeship get a pitiful wage. In their first year they are used as messenger boys. It is a form of cheap labour. In their fifth year they are almost tradesmen and do tradesmen's work but they get only an apprentice's wages.

That is a system that the Minister should change. He has been a member of youth committees and I think he has an interest in youth. I think it is something that is close to his heart. I know his heart is pretty hard but at least he might consider an approach to the Apprenticeship Committee in an effort to encourage lads into apprenticeship. One cannot expect boys to go into apprenticeships on low wages when they know that if they go into the Police Force or become teachers or truck-drivers they can get top wages.

Mr. Dewar: Can you give me any case of a first-year apprentice being used as a message boy?

Mr. MANN: The hon. gentleman has only to go into any workshop to see it.

Mr. Dewar: Will you let me have a case?

Mr. MANN: I have no specific case, but if the Minister goes into a workshop and has a look at what they are doing with their first-year apprentices—

Mr. Dewar: I thought you were fair dinkum.

Mr. MANN: I hope the Minister is fair dinkum and has a look at the apprenticeship system. First of all, there should be a

separate apprenticeship school. Experienced teachers should be provided, and the staff at each school should be strong enough to ensure adequate teaching. Trade teachers should be trained to the standards of other teachers and a syllabus committee should be set up. It should meet each year and set the standard and pattern for the following year. When that is done, apprentices should be given day training solely. Boys now go down to college at night-time after parking up the street to have a bottle of soft drink and a pie. I feel they should be given day training only.

Mr. Ewan: That is more than you gave them.

Mr. MANN: That is right—it is more than we gave them—but that was six or seven years ago. I am advocating this as being more in conformity with the requirements of today. I say to the Minister that it is something he should look at. If he wants to get apprentices he should see that they are trained properly. He will then get workers as good as any in the world. Train them under a system they will be pleased to work under.

Mr. Dewar: I have already stated what I am going to do.

Mr. MANN: I said that. I read it in the Press and I am glad the Minister confirms it. At least I feel now that the hon. gentleman will be a worthwhile Minister. Previously, I was not too sure.

I should like now to say something about the hon. member for Sherwood. I am sorry he is not here, because I feel he has allowed himself to be used as a blowpipe for someone else. He got up and read a prepared statement attacking the hon. member for South Brisbane. I think it was cowardly of him to attack the hon. member for South Brisbane in that manner. I think that the Minister, or the former Minister, should have done it. Where was the former Minister in charge of police when that debate was going on? He was conspicuous by his absence. He did not have the fortitude to come in and defend the Commissioner of Police and the department when they were attacked by the hon. member for South Brisbane. He left it to a mere junior backbencher like the hon. member for Sherwood, who allowed himself to be his blowpipe.

I want to reply also to a statement made by the hon. member for Ashgrove. He also came into this Chamber and made an attack on the hon. member for South Brisbane. Let me say at the outset that the hon. member for South Brisbane was making a speech of his own accord; he was speaking for himself in this Chamber. No member here has the right to stifle any other member. The hon. members for Ashgrove and Nundah delight in coming into this Chamber and attacking the Labour Party, making false accusations and assassinating the characters

of members of that party. The hon. member for Townsville South receives the approbation of hon. members over there because he attacks us. He gets "Hear, hears!" from the Liberals. When the hon. member for South Brisbane makes an attack they say that it is disgusting and shocking. I heard the hon. member for Bundaberg speak. Quite frankly I differ in many ways from him on the Police Force. When Mr. Gair was Premier several members of the Police Force were victimised. McNicholl, Hambrecht, Gill Cook and Dan Nicol from Rockhampton, Bill Reedman and others were victimised by our Government. I make no apology for saying it.

A Government Member: What did you do about it?

Mr. MANN: I did something about it. I am not going to tell the hon. member what it was. One member of the Police Force, Mr. Eddington, was paraded before the Commissioner of Police because he worked at a polling booth of the hon. member for South Brisbane. That is wrong. I do not care if all the members of the Police Force work against me. If they vote for the Government, good luck to them. I had no axe to grind against the Commissioner of Police. I always found him courteous and obliging when I have approached him. I have no axe to grind against Inspector Bauer. When he was in charge of the C.I.B. I could always approach him. But as to the fellow who is there now, I would not ring him up if my house was burning down. That is my attitude towards him. I like to give credit where it is due. Ted Osborne, in Townsville, is the essence of a gentleman. When he was in charge of the Licensing Squad he was a very fair man. He did the job he had to do.

If police officers want to vote for the Liberals, let them vote for them. We receive complaints at the Q.C.E. office from members of the Police Force. Several matters were sent to us by Mr. Keffe, the secretary of the Q.C.E. Mr. Duggan rang the Police Commissioner and asked him about it, and he denied it. I suppose I would deny it, too. Mr. Duggan was prepared to take his word, and I am prepared to take his word. I do not think it means so much. Political views do not matter. If they want to vote Tory, let them vote Tory. If they want to vote Labour, let them vote Labour. Any complaints I have had about the police I have made either to the Commissioner or the Minister.

I had a clash with a policeman in the Valley the other day. He should be told what his duties are. I cannot complain because he was doing his job according to the letter of the law. The police officer should take into consideration the position as it arises. If there is any doubt the benefit of it should be given to the offending motorist or anyone else. Policemen should not

be officious and offensive. That is my attitude to the police. I have a lot of friends in the Police Force, but some policemen do not like me.

In the few minutes at my disposal I want to refer to the statement by the Commissioner on juvenile criminals. I lay the blame at the door of the Government, and make no apology for doing so. I believe that many of these young lads who thieve are out of work. In order to get a bit of pocket money they resort to crime. Those in work give their money to the T.A.B. on Saturday so they, too, have to resort to stealing.

Mr. Sullivan: You don't steal.

Mr. MANN: No, I don't.

Mr. Sullivan: You give your money to the T.A.B.

Mr. MANN: I don't give anything to the T.A.B. I may have had a bet with the S.P. bookies but I have never had a bet on the tote; the tote will never get any of my money.

I lay the blame at the Government's door for all the juvenile crimes mentioned by the Commissioner. The Government has not found work for these men who are unemployed and have no money. Others go to the T.A.B. lose their money and are compelled to steal. While I am referring to the T.A.B., I say that the T.A.B. was created by the Government, and the chairman of the T.A.B., who was appointed by this Government, must think he is in Russia or Vietnam, or somewhere like that, because he sent a circular to all employees asking them to become policemen, informers and pimps. The Q.C.E. received a letter from a branch of the A.L.P. complaining about the attitude Mr. Sakzewski adopted. It is a reflection on the Police Force. He wants every employee in the T.A.B. to become an informer or a pimp. I resent that.

Although the Liberal members may laugh, I sound this note of warning: in a year or two, due to the operations of the T.A.B., pressure will be brought to bear on the Government by the business community because of the way in which the T.A.B. is raking in money for the benefit of the Government. It is doing this so well that there is little or no money for business houses in the Valley and the city.

(Time expired.)

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) (2.52 p.m.): I have nothing against the Police Force personally, but I wish to bring to the attention of hon. members—especially A.L.P. members who have complained so bitterly about the actions of the police against the A.L.P. in parts of their electorates—information to the effect that the police played a very prominent part in Mr. Hilton's electorate, especially the sergeant of police at Wallangarra, who is president of the A.L.P. in that town. He

waged a very determined attack against Mr. Hilton during the last election campaign.

An Opposition Member: I thought you had left the Q.L.P.

Mr. ADAIR: I think a great deal of Mr. Hilton. He is one of the finest people ever to enter this Assembly.

Mr. Thackeray: He was a rat and a scab.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! Those remarks are most unparliamentary and I ask the hon. member to withdraw them immediately.

Mr. Thackeray: I was referring to a former member of Parliament.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to withdraw his remarks.

Mr. Thackeray: I withdraw them.

Mr. ADAIR: Those are very nice words to use about anyone! You would be frightened to say that about me, or Mr. Hilton, outside the Chamber.

Mr. Thackeray: I will say it outside any time you like.

Mr. ADAIR: Say it about me outside the Chamber!

Mr. Thackeray: Any time.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order!

Government Members interjected.

Mr. ADAIR: The words used by the hon. member riled me. Everyone in the Chamber knows that Mr. Hilton would be very fair in his election campaign. I am told it is a fact that the sergeant of police made a very determined attack upon him in the Wallangarra area, as did the two constables under his control. In his own town the police were also against him. Members of the A.L.P. cannot growl about anyone in the Police Force playing any part against the A.L.P. at election time.

Mr. MANN: They can come as much as they like.

Mr. ADAIR: I do not care. They can come to my electorate as much as they like, any time they like.

On behalf of my electorate I compliment the police on the work they are carrying out. Especially in remote areas like Thursday Island, Coen and Laura, they are doing an excellent job.

I want to bring to the Minister's notice, though, the absurdity of requiring the police at Coen to patrol thousands of miles of country with pack-horses and saddle-horses. It is too ridiculous for words. I have complained on several occasions but so far I have not had any satisfaction. The police at Coen have been promised a Land Rover but so far they have not got it. If they

want to visit Bamaga or one of the other mission stations in the Cape York Peninsula, they have to travel with about 22 horses—pack-horses and saddle-horses—and black trackers, and take their food. Even if they are not given a Land Rover, it would be cheaper to give them air passes to fly into those areas. To patrol some parts of the area they have to hitch rides from graziers.

Two years ago I went to Laura and at the time of the annual race meeting the policeman in charge, who came from the city, closed the hotel at exactly 10 p.m. I appealed to him to let them have a go. The ringers and the graziers were in and race nights are the two nights in the whole year on which they have an opportunity to let off steam. I appealed to him and he gave them an extra half hour. I appeal to the Minister not to send city slickers out into those areas. Send bush policemen, men who know the people of the bush. City slickers go out there for promotion, stay a couple of years and make a nuisance of themselves to the people of the area and make their lives a misery. Policemen sent into those areas should be men with a thorough knowledge of the country.

Mr. Dewar: In what way do you mean they make themselves a nuisance to the people?

Mr. Walsh: If they close the pubs strictly at 10 they are a nuisance.

Mr. ADAIR: Yes, and they gool anybody who gets a bit drunk. The only time the ringers can get drunk is when they come to town. They are out droving all the rest of the year, covering miles and miles of country, and a little drink does not hurt them.

Mr. Han'lon: They can't have a drink every day when they knock off work.

Mr. ADAIR: Of course they can't, and it is time the Police Department put somebody in those areas who knows something about the people there and the conditions under which they live.

Another matter I want to bring to the notice of the Minister is the condition of the police station and accommodation for police at Mareeba. The present building has been there ever since Mareeba was first settled. The accommodation for policemen at Mareeba is something that has to be seen to be believed. It is time the Government built a police station and a residence to meet the requirements of the town.

On the subject of tourism, the hon. member for Albert told us what the Treasurer, the Minister for Main Roads and the Minister for Labour and Industry are doing for the South Coast. To me the South Coast is not worth anything. With all due respect to you, Mr. Gaven, it is all artificial and has all been put there and assisted to the

hilt by the Government. I say that the Minister should get those fellows off his back and go north.

No other city in Queensland has more tourist attractions than has Cairns, as all who have been there will know. In spite of this, it receives very little publicity from the Tourist Bureau. The Far North of Queensland has everything. People can leave planes, trains, or ships at Cairns and spend a whole fortnight seeing the country. They can go on the Cook Highway from Cairns to Port Douglas and Mossman. That is one of the finest drives in the State. They can travel from Mossman to Julatten, through to Mareeba—one of the most pleasant drives in the State—then on the Kuranda Highway, the Palmerston Highway, and on to the Atherton Tableland, where there are Lake Barrine, Lake Eacham, and the Tinaroo Falls Dam. Off the coast at Cairns is Green Island. No other city in Queensland has near it more tourist attractions than has Cairns.

Mr. Walsh: Where was the motel you opened?

Mr. ADAIR: The Cannon Park Motel.

I see that the hon. member for Mourilyan is waiting to speak, so I shall say in conclusion a few words concerning the State Children Department. Why Townsville has been made the centre for the State Children Department in the North, I do not know. Cairns has a much larger population in the district surrounding it, exceeding that of Townsville by many thousands. The area round Cairns is closely settled, whereas one has to travel 70 miles from Townsville to reach the first township. Townsville has a population of 55,000 but it is isolated. Cairns should at least have been considered the more suitable place for establishing an office of the State Children Department.

Mr. BYRNE (Mourilyan) (3.3 p.m.): I rise today to deal with a matter that I consider to be of the utmost importance. I think that it correctly comes under the Minister's attention. Various bodies in the North are particularly concerned about the increase in crimes of violence in that area. Unless something along the lines that I am going to suggest is done about this un-Australian activity, it can be expected to increase.

The "Evening Advocate", a fine newspaper circulating in the area, reports proceedings that take place from time to time following such incidents, and the people naturally are incited to such an extent that something will have to be done. The Minister might be prepared to have formed a committee to include police officers, medical men, and legal men, whose consultations might result in something that will reduce this problem in the North. I am not referring to any particular class of people. There has been a tremendous influx of migrants in North Queensland. They are entirely unaware of the Australian way of life and our traditions are new to them; consequently, some of them

get out of hand. Some Australians get out of hand at times, too, and most of the migrants turn out to be good citizens and take their proper place in the life of the community. The problem is a real one, and if the Minister could give consideration to it, in conjunction with the police, medical men and legal men, some good may be achieved.

The difficulties of the police are increasing greatly because of the mixed population in various areas of the State. There are many nationalities in my electorate, and the police have been very tolerant and have done a good job in preventing animosity between groups of migrants. I wish to place on record my appreciation of their work. As to my electorate—I speak only of my electorate—I think I might be pardoned for mentioning members of the Police Force because I feel that I am in honour bound to give credit where credit is due. In Innisfail we have had such fine inspectors as Allan White and Murray McDonald, our present inspector; at Mourilyan we have Senior Sergeant Moylan, an outstanding officer, and the officers at El Arish, South Johnstone and Silkwood are all men of a very fine type indeed. I meet them frequently and have always received the utmost courtesy from them. In return, I have paid them the courtesy which I think is due to them. Sometimes, of course, local rows and differences arise among the police, but they are generally straightened out. All in all, I have no complaints against members of the Police Force in my electorate.

The employment of labour is essential, and the Government should ensure that when its instrumentalities issue licenses carrying certain privileges, the conditions attaching to them are fulfilled. If they are not, a penalty should be imposed for ignoring them. A sawmilling company in North Queensland was given a licence covering 3,000,000 superficial feet of timber. Over the past three years it has made no attempt to harvest the timber under its licence, and the Government has condoned its action and actually assisted it by granting it the right to amalgamate with another company. I shall have more to say about this as the session proceeds, but I ask the Minister to ensure that when departments under his control issue licences granting privileges to the people to whom they are issued, all the conditions attaching to them are carried out.

I should like to make one further suggestion before concluding. There will soon be a great increase in industrial and labour activities in the sugar industry. Many commodities will be required, the cost of which will run into many millions of pounds. In addition to mechanical equipment, building materials, and other materials for industrial purposes, many household commodities will be required. In the area from Townsville north alone, the value of material required by people who are granted cane assignments will be enormous. I am sorry I have to

rush as I am doing, but here is an opportunity for the Minister, if he can collate the requirements of hundreds, and possibly thousands, of additional cane assignees in North Queensland, to provide for the supply of these things rather than have them imported from the southern part of the Commonwealth. I am anxious to see the Minister, if possible, retain Queensland money in Queensland and promote, and assist in every way he can, industries in North Queensland, particularly to supply the requirements that will be necessary in the sugar industry. If he can retain only part of the trade it will be very valuable indeed. I shall content myself with those few remarks.

Mr. DIPLOCK (Aubigny) (3.11 p.m.): I should like to thank the previous speaker for giving me the opportunity to say a few words before the debate is closed. This is the first opportunity I have had to congratulate the Minister on his elevation to Cabinet rank. Although we sit in Opposition I congratulate him most sincerely on his interest in secondary industry. The Government has, for a long time, preached decentralisation, and in my opinion the only way to carry that policy into effect is to encourage secondary industry. The Minister did not merely pay lip service to that policy. In the very short time that he was in charge of secondary industry, he actually did something for my area and, without wishing to detract from the ability of the Minister who is now in charge of secondary industry, I quite openly say that I was very sorry to see that the Minister for Labour and Industry had lost that particular department.

I wish to take the opportunity also of thanking officers of all departments administered by the Minister for Labour and Industry for their readiness at all times to investigate matters brought under their notice by me. Particularly do I wish to compliment officers of the State Children Department for their desire to really assist deserving cases. I have been associated with children for many years, and it has been very pleasing for me to find a set of officers who really do everything within their power to assist, in every way possible, cases they consider worth-while and deserving. I very heartily compliment both the Director and his officers on their attitude.

But there is a matter that has concerned me for a considerable time. It is the differential in allowances paid to mothers—shall we call them “assisted natural mothers”—and foster mothers. I do not wish for one moment to detract in any way from the good work that most foster mothers are performing, or from that done by the various institutions, but one must be realistic and acknowledge the fact that in a big percentage of cases foster mothers accept responsibility for children for economic reasons.

I do not think any woman would accept the responsibility of rearing six or eight children unless there was some reason for doing so. I do admit that in some cases there is a keen desire to have a family to look after but in most instances I think the reason is economic. I do not suggest for one minute that these foster mothers or the institutions receive too much, but my experience over a very long period leads me to say very definitely that the assisted mother—that is, the mother of the child—lavishes care and love and attention on her children, whose father has died or deserted them, to the point where she makes terrific sacrifices in order to make up for what the children have lost. I refer to the loss of the father, either by death or desertion. I quite understand that the assisted mother in most cases receives a widow's pension, which includes a child allowance, and also child endowment. One point I should like to bring very forcibly under the Minister's notice—because I know he will be interested—is that the assisted mother who has been deserted by her husband has to wait for six months before she receives a widow's pension. The lot of many during that period is very undesirable. I know the Minister will look into that matter.

I give credit to the Government for progressively increasing the allowance from £1 per week per child which was paid to both foster and assisted mothers in 1954. I understand that at the present time 25s. per child per week is paid to assisted mothers. That is the allowance paid to a mother who has sufficient interest in her children to more or less dedicate herself to their upbringing. She receives that amount of 25s. whether the child is going to primary school or secondary school. Even though she is called upon to meet all sorts of expenses the 25s. is not increased.

What is the position with the foster mother? She gets £2 5s. a week as the basic allowance, and when the child for whom she is caring goes to secondary school she receives an additional allowance to meet the calls on her by the school for sporting facilities, and so on. In addition, she gets an allowance of 5s. per child per week to provide pocket money for the children for whom she is caring. I give all credit to the Government for making these allowances available, but they are placing a child's natural mother at a disadvantage compared with the foster mother. After all, as most hon. members would agree, a child's natural mother will do a lot more for her child in its upbringing than will a foster mother; therefore, she should be given more consideration. I hope that this will be forthcoming.

Before concluding, I wish to make a few comments on the Police Department. Indeed, if I did not, I feel I would not be in the fashion. I make it clear at the outset that any comments I make on this subject are certainly not aimed at any individual. I have

associated with police officers for a very long time during my term as a teacher. I was more or less challenged on a previous occasion when I said that I have not come across any member of the Police Force who really was not doing a good job for society, but I am going to repeat that statement. If I had something to say against any member of the Police Force this Chamber would not be the place for me to make my comments. I would go to the Minister and pass on what I knew, or thought I knew, so that the prestige of the department and its officers would not be lowered. Unless we maintain the high prestige of the personnel of the department, the public, which relies so much on the force, will not feel very secure.

Mr. Walsh: The police administration has some responsibility in that, you know.

Mr. DIPLOCK: The officers in charge of police stations in my electorate are doing a wonderful job. If the Commissioner were to ask me if I wished any officer to be transferred, to be honest, I should have to say that, generally speaking, they were all doing a very good job.

I have already brought one matter to the Commissioner's attention and, in fairness to him, I must say that he has agreed to consider it. Towns such as Dalby, which are growing very quickly, are attracting many undesirables and lately we have had a few cases of petty thieving, just as they have occurred at Redcliffe.

Mr. Houghton: And Inala.

Mr. DIPLOCK: Yes, and Inala.

Perhaps on advice from Brisbane, the inspector has now detailed a policeman to be on duty all the time. This caused the number of offences to drop to an extremely low level. I have spoken to some of the officers, who are very decent fellows about certain work not being carried out, and they have said, "We just cannot get on to it; we have to do this and that." I appeal to the Minister, and to the Commissioner, to consider the appointment of at least one more officer to Dalby. I believe that in my area in some instances man-power is wasted. I have in mind one hamlet which has two police officers. There is not enough work for two of them. I do not pretend to be a know-all, but I know that the work is not there because relieving officers have told me so. The sergeant keeps this very sleepy hamlet on pins and needles. He and his constable are sneaking around at all times of the night to see that nothing untoward happens, but nothing untoward has happened there in the last 100 years. I think there is a little waste of man-power there, and I can instance another wastage of man-power. In the country, when someone may do something wrong under the licensing regulations, such as selling beer on Sunday, or taking a bet, a motor-car with perhaps four or five policemen in it is sent from Brisbane to catch the man responsible for it.

That is a definite wastage of man-power and is an unnecessary expense. I am sure that if the administrators were to say to the officers in charge of a particular town, "John Jones is doing the wrong thing; we want him prosecuted", the officers in the town would have no trouble in prosecuting him.

I had intended to speak about several matters but the Opposition were kind enough to give me a chance to speak and I must reciprocate. I will now conclude on the note that, overall, I have nothing but admiration for the officers in the Police Force and in all other departments controlled by the Minister.

Mr. DONALD (Ipswich East) (3.24 p.m.): I sincerely thank the hon. member for Aubigny for making it possible for me to participate in this debate. I intended to say a lot about relief assistance, the Child Welfare Department and the Police Force, but I will content myself by saying that I have nothing but admiration for the officers in control of the various departments and the people who work under them. Quite a lot could be said truthfully in eulogy of the work of those who control the departments—Mr. McCarthy, Mr. Clark, and the Commissioner of Police.

However, I wish to refer to certain criticism that has been levelled at the Minister's attitude towards the growth of industry in Ipswich. I assure him that Ipswich will never become a suburb of Brisbane though it is possible that, with the passage of the years, it will absorb the metropolitan area.

The best way I can illustrate the growth of industrial development in Ipswich is to cite one example, and that is the Morris Woollen Mills of Redbank. Those mills were founded by the late John Morris in 1933 or 1934. He went along to the then Premier, the late Mr. Forgan Smith, and said, "I want some encouragement and some financial assistance. What can your Government do to help?" Mr. Forgan Smith, in his wisdom, carrying out the policy of the Australian Labour Party, said, "We can guarantee you to the extent of £12,000." The guarantee was accepted and I am very happy to say that every penny of that £12,000 has been repaid to the Government. The present managing director, Mr. Ivor Morris, son of the late John Morris, is the fourth generation of the family to have been successfully associated with the textile industry.

The firm has won a world-wide reputation for excellent service, exporting thousands of bales of scoured and carbonised wool to the United Kingdom, Japan, the United States of America, Canada and various countries of Europe. The firm has the only top-making plant in Queensland and is now in a position to compete on the world market. The production goes mainly to India and the East, while inquiries are continually being made of the company from very much farther afield.

The company is engaged in most aspects of the textile trade, having, some little time ago, expanded its equipment by the introduction of a modern worsted-spinning plant. In addition to these avenues, the company has various by-products covering almost all aspects of the textile trade.

The quality of the firm's product is demonstrated by the success achieved in the Australia-wide competition held under the auspices of the Australian Wool Board in recent years. Of the 70-odd awards issued, Morris Woollen Mills of Redbank were successful in securing 16 gold medals, the greatest number of awards, I feel, that has been won by any organisation in Australia. The company is naturally proud of this achievement and is now in the process of extending its interests in the export market and will be in a very much wider field of operation as a result of the excellence of its equipment, productivity and trained personnel, of which, incidentally, the management and the employees are very proud, and with every justification.

From the establishment of the firm 30 years ago—and, it should be remembered, during one of the severest depressions this country has known—it has developed into a very successful enterprise, operating a group of companies well established in their main factory production of ladies' woollen piece-goods with an export trade in excess of £1,000,000 a year.

This is a success story and a story that can be told over and over again of enterprises in the town of Ipswich. It is a justification of Labour's foresight, thinking, and encouragement.

In the few minutes left to me I want to thank the Minister for sacrificing 10 minutes of his time for reply. That reply is not merely his right but his privilege and I would not want to encroach on it. But, as the Police Force has been under very severe attack during the debate, I just want to say this: personally, I know very, very few policemen—probably I know fewer than any other hon. member—but I do not know one policeman who is not an excellent citizen; I have nothing but admiration for the manner in which they have carried out their duties. The Commissioner and the head of the Police Department at Ipswich have always extended to me the courtesy due to an elected representative, or, for that matter, to any citizen. They have always been efficient and courteous, and I am always very happy to see a policeman on points duty. I know then that I can proceed with safety and that I am neither going to cause an accident nor have any inconvenience caused to me. I feel that they are deserving of our appreciation. I feel that unjust attacks on police officers tend to remove the confidence of the people. That is a very dangerous thing, and could lead to a situation that none of us would like.

The State Children Department is providing a wonderful service to the State. Deserted wives and children have been referred to

during the course of this debate. We find that in the State of Queensland there are 637 deserted wives and 1,610 deserted children. I cannot conceive how any man who has taken a woman to be his wife and has been responsible for the birth of children can callously walk out on them. It does not seem natural to me. Whatever reason a man may have for deserting his wife, he has no justification whatever for deserting the children for whom he has been responsible.

I do not know the answer to the problem and cannot suggest one. I cannot understand how men who have sworn to honour and look after their wives can allow their children to become victims of circumstances over which they have no control. To digress briefly for a moment, I have a neighbour from the Old Country who has been here about 18 months. She has four foster children, two brothers from one family and a brother and sister from another. In common with other members of the community, I feel genuine sympathy for foster children, but let me say that if every foster child has the home and care that is provided by my neighbour, we have little to be sorry for. She dresses them well, trains them well, sees that they go to school and Sunday school, which is very important, and that they are well fed and well mannered. A tremendous debt of gratitude is owed to people like that. We can all make pretty speeches about all kinds of things, but it does one a lot of good to see someone doing something for children whose legitimate parents, or one of them, have been prepared to let them exist the best way they can.

Of course these foster parents receive something from the State for their work, but it is not nearly enough to compensate them for their trouble. It is wonderful to see women who have raised their own children and have grandchildren but who are still prepared to take in unwanted children and treat them as their own.

The time has arrived when I promised to resume my seat to allow the Minister to reply. He has much to reply to. I thank again the hon. member for Aubigny, and I thank the Minister for his courtesy in allowing me to say those few words.

Hon. A. T. DEWAR (Wavell—Minister for Labour and Industry) (3.34 p.m.): I am afraid that I will not have the time to cover all the comments that have been made, but I do want to say at this stage that I believe the standard of the debate today has been much higher than it was on Tuesday, when it was almost impossible to find, in the remarks of hon. members opposite, any reference to the Estimates before the Committee.

Secondly, I thank recent speakers for their kindly comments about the Director of the State Children Department. I agree with them entirely. Mr. Clark, who came to this department from the Department of

Health and Home Affairs, where he was concerned mainly with fire brigades and things of an administrative nature, has adapted himself wonderfully to work among children. He is a sympathetic man, a family man, with great understanding, and he has done a great deal for the children who come under the care of the State.

A number of hon. members discussed foster mothers and assisted mothers, and the hon. member for Aubigny asked what the difference was. It is simply this: the Commonwealth Government aids widows with their own children—the assisted mothers—and we supplement their income. I might say that there has been some criticism in this direction recently. Foster mothers get no assistance from the Commonwealth other than by way of child endowment, and that is why we have increased the amount payable to them.

The first part of the comments of the hon. member for Ipswich East had no relation to my portfolio. Secondary industries are no longer under my control. He also challenged me on my attitude towards Ipswich. I denied to the editor of the newspaper concerned that I had made the statement attributed to me and he accepted my denial. I am not responsible for the fact that my denial was tucked away in a corner of a page of the newspaper. I give you, Sir, my unequivocal denial that I made the statement attributed to me, and nothing that I said could have been construed to mean what the statement said. In fact, the reporter who attended the meeting must have done all his writing after he left the meeting, because I did not see him take a note. I did not think it was my concern to pursue the matter further after the editor had accepted my denial.

Mr. Davies: Did you say the newspaper would not publish your denial?

Mr. DEWAR: It tucked a little denial away in a corner, completely out of context with the report of the day before. In fact, I told the editor that I had never in my life used the term "West Moreton", so the report saying I referred to West Moreton was completely out of character. When I refer to Ipswich, I say "Ipswich".

The hon. member for Cook covered a good deal of territory in his remarks. I am rather pleased that he raised the matter of police officers participating in the last election campaign on behalf of the Australian Labour Party, because it highlights the fact that hon. members on this side of the Chamber could not care less. As a matter of fact, the hon. member for Carnarvon, Mr. McKechnie, told me that the same police officer did some work in opposition to him. We are not concerned about that. We do not say that a member of the Police Force, or any other person, is not entitled to his own political views. We believe that democracy is a wonderful thing and that everyone in the community

is entitled to his or her political views. We raised this matter on Tuesday night only because of the charges of wholesale organising that were made against us.

The hon. member for Cook spoke also about the need for a police vehicle at Coen. The matter is being investigated. As he probably knows, there was a vehicle there in 1958 but it was smashed. Servicing was one of the main problems, but the Commissioner's staff is now investigating the position. It is understood that there is now someone up there capable of servicing a vehicle, and the hon. member has every reason to hope that there will be a vehicle there before long.

As to the police building at Mareeba, I could remind the hon. member that during its 40 years in office Labour did nothing about it; instead, I will say to him that it is probable that a new one will be built next year.

The hon. member for Cook told me to get the hon. member for South Coast and the hon. member for Albert off my back. Frankly, I was rather nonplussed by his remark, because he is a very levelheaded person, not given to making wild statements. The hon. member for Cairns also made some wild statements on Tuesday, and if I had an hour I could cover adequately the matters he raised. However, I suggest to the hon. member for Cook that he look at this file, which contains an answer to the Cairns City Council and some other organisations in North Queensland. The Premier covered the ground in great detail in his reply. That is my answer as to the publicity that has been given to Cairns. Because he is very ignorant of what has been done, I think it will do his heart good to read that file. It shows how much has been spent in effort and money in publicising the Cairns district. In fact, it is entirely due to the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau that the Cairns Tropical Wonderland Tour was established in the first place. It has already this year, to 26 October, carried 2,104 passengers, which is a record. I mentioned this point in my introductory speech but let me say unequivocally that Cairns has not only not missed out on tourist publicity but I do not know of any other area of equal size that has had the same volume of money spent on it.

Green Island has been mentioned and I have no less an authority than Mr. Joe Wyer, who told me less than three weeks ago that Green Island was made because of the under-water observatory and, more recently, Marine-land. Those two attractions are there because this Government gave assistance in establishing them, and Mr. Joe Wyer said quite unreservedly that the under-water observatory has made Green Island.

So the hon. member for Cook is well wide of the mark when he talks about the lack of publicity for Cairns. As a matter of fact, the comments he made in all

innocence, and those made by the hon. member for Cairns with full spleen, are typical of the comments we have had from that area in the last few years, yet none of them were mentioned to me when I was there. Mr. Darcy Chattaway was most friendly to me. Having received the Premier's letter and my letter, he knew that the charges that were made were suspect. It is symptomatic that the people who do the most screaming and have the most criticism are those who do the least to help themselves. On the contrary, people on the Gold Coast and on the Barrier Reef islands were getting the business and were doing the most to help themselves without any criticism of anything that the Bureau has done. It is an amazing instance of action and reaction being equal and opposite.

I have dealt with those things only because they were fairly current. I have to watch the clock very closely. The hon. member for Townsville North made complaints about the cut-back of payments to children, as also did the hon. member for Bulimba. The policy is fully explainable. The Commonwealth Government has increased its pension rates and on this occasion the increase is much larger. We make no apologies as a department; in actual fact, this decision was made while the administration was still under Dr. Noble, but I approved of it at Cabinet level when he submitted it because the whole basis of helping an assisted widow with children in this State has been, definitely since we have been the Government—I do not know what happened before—to keep the payments to these mothers in line with the male basic wage. I believe we have a responsibility to do this. The Commonwealth is now coming into the field to a far greater extent, and if we allowed these payments to go on an assisted widow—and we have adjusted some of them where they got something like £20 a week—with four or five children would be getting more than a married man with a wife and three children who was on the basic wage of £14 15s. and who, incidentally, would be contributing by taxation to the Commonwealth Social Services Fund. These things have to be watched so that anomalies do not arise. We have always limited the amount of money paid on the basis of the male basic wage. That is the whole reason for it. Might I also say that the department has dealt with each case individually and it is interesting to note that, of the 789 families affected, only 80 have raised queries. I approved of one early this morning for the hon. member for Bundaberg after we had a second look at it. We had a second look at one this afternoon for the hon. member for Rockhampton South.

I invite hon. members to let us have particulars if they find instances of widows having some hardship imposed on them, possibly through sufficient thought not having been given to their cases. This is a sympathetic department. If a mistake has been made, it will be corrected immediately. I give

that assurance. It is rather significant that altered circumstances have been found in 27 of these cases. Assistance has either been restored or partially restored in those cases, and there are still four cases under consideration. Only 80 out of 800 have come back, and 27 of them have been readjusted. That offer is there. A readjustment will be made if any hardship is imposed because of some factors the department was not aware of.

One assumes that the occupants of the front bench on the Opposition side are the leaders of the party. Of the first five hon. members on that side who spoke, allegedly on these Estimates, at least two, and possibly three, seemed to be more concerned that I have been working for the spastic kiddies for 13 years than they were about really discussing the Estimates.

Mr. Walsh: That is all to your credit, anyhow.

Mr. DEWAR: They did not seem to think I should do these things. But I will not seek their opinion, and that's that!

I want to nail home this ridiculous nonsense started last year, and carried on particularly this last month, of "Why doesn't the Government put up speakers?" When I sat over on that side of the Chamber we were all on our toes and jumping to get into the debate. We had to complain bitterly that members of the Labour Government were deliberately getting up and talking all the nonsense under the sun to keep us out of the debate. You know that is correct, Mr. Gaven, because we had to take the Government to task over it. The whole situation is entirely different today. The Opposition are now asking members of the Government, "Why don't you get up and speak?", but hon. members on this side are perfectly satisfied with the Estimates. When we were the Opposition we had to be held back because we were so keen to get up and have our two bobs' worth.

Until today the only two members of the Opposition who made an honest attempt to deal with the Estimates were the hon. members for Belmont and Salisbury. Today the hon. member for Bundaberg and the speakers who followed him did deal with the Estimates.

Mr. Walsh: I am generally fairly relevant.

Mr. DEWAR: I will give the hon. gentleman that. I do not always believe him, but he is always relevant.

On Tuesday the hon. member for Tablelands^a spoke about the establishment of a Tourist Bureau office on the Tableland. I can give him no reason to hope that will ever happen. End-of-the-line offices of the bureau are a problem. I fear that we already have too many. I know it will not please some hon. members, but I have reached the stage now where I can sort out the sheep from the goats. From now on we will be

spending money in the areas that we think should be promoted, and we will not be worrying about the static on the sidelines from those hangers-on in the industry who make a lot of noise but do nothing for the industry. I believe that we should be spending a lot of money outside the State in order to get people into the State. I can offer the hon. member for Tablelands no reason to expect that he will ever have a Tourist Bureau office on the Tableland. We will have a look at the suggestion about the Cairns to Chillagoe rail motor. If there is any way we can develop tourist activity in that direction, we will.

Several hon. members mentioned picnic areas. Surely the local authority has some responsibility in this matter. As a Tourist Bureau we certainly have not any money to spend on the creation of picnic and recreation areas on the side of the road. I know that around Lake Barrine the Eacham Shire are most anxious to get on with the job of creating picnic areas. They have been worrying the Minister for Mines and Main Roads about getting an area that has been created by a diversion of the main road set aside for this purpose. Local authorities have a definite responsibility in this matter. When all is said and done, a local authority exists for the benefit of the ratepayers in its district and, if it will not take an interest in something to attract tourists, surely it cannot expect someone else to be concerned about getting them in.

Mr. Davies: Which local authority do you think is neglecting its job?

Mr. DEWAR: Any local authority that does not see fit to build picnic and recreation areas cannot very well expect other people to do it.

The hon. member for Tablelands suggested that a picnic area should be put alongside the road. I gather there must be some areas he has in mind where this should be done.

Mr. Wallis-Smith interjected.

Mr. DEWAR: The hon. member raised it, as did other hon. members. I think it is a matter for local authorities to deal with.

Mr. Davies: Does the Minister agree with taking camping areas away from the sea-front on the South Coast?

Mr. DEWAR: I have no knowledge of that. I am a North Coast man. We welcome them at Coolool.

Mr. Walsh: Dear, oh dear! How can you say a thing like that? I did not think you would show your prejudice in that way.

Mr. DEWAR: I like the beauty of the Sunshine Coast.

Mr. Walsh: What beauty are you referring to?

Mr. DEWAR: The rugged beauty of the drive between Coolum and Point Arkwright. I do not think there is a more beautiful drive in Queensland. I have to give that area a plug as I am president of the local life-saving club.

The hon. member for Cairns spoke for a quarter of an hour without saying a thing. What he did say was completely wide of the mark. He talked about "The Land of Opportunity" and said that this was the type of tourist-promotion literature handed out by our Tourist Bureau at the Sydney Trade Fair. In reply, I say, firstly, that it was not a Tourist Bureau publication; it was a Secondary Industries Division publication; secondly, it was not handed out by the Tourist Bureau at the Sydney Trade Fair; thirdly, it was not even handed out at the Secondary Industries Division exhibit. The booklets distributed at the Sydney Trade Fair were the current publications. They were hot off the press when the fair started. The former one, "The Land of Opportunity," became outdated. That is why the new booklets were produced. There were about 3,000 of them in the department, and because we found there was so much interest in Queensland—although the hon. member for Nudgee has said otherwise—and the Queensland pavilion at the Trade Fair was kept so busy, we had to send to Queensland and ask for those 3,000 copies of "The Land of Opportunity" to be sent down. The school children in New South Wales were coming in in their hundreds and asking for something about Queensland. My colleagues who were there will support my remarks. We took the opportunity to send the booklets down to Sydney, knowing full well that they would have a considerable impact in the homes to which they went. We distributed them to the school children in New South Wales because kiddies like that sort of thing and, with modern education and project work, they would be very useful. We were amazed at the fantastic interest in Queensland exhibited by the secondary-school children of New South Wales. That is the story of that literature.

I have not time to deal with the matter raised by the hon. member for Tablelands about the letter that went to the Cairns City Council. Frankly, I have had a discussion with Mr. D'Arcy Chattaway, and so has the Premier, who also believes that the Mayor of Cairns will not be very happy with the hon. member for Cairns for raising this matter in the Chamber. I was up there three weeks ago, but the matter was not raised then.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: You are on the wrong track.

Mr. DEWAR: Maybe no-one will lose any sleep; I do not know if this is another group that the A.L.P. has in Cairns. I find it hard to keep track of them.

We have a wonderful story of tourist promotion to tell. I just want to indicate the fantastic success we are having in Queensland as a result of the promotions of the bureau interstate. Only this morning the figures of the bookings of interstate offices for last month came to me. They will be of interest to those in tourist areas. Under the head of bookings in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Newcastle they set out a break-up of the areas of the State to which the various people go. Of the 2,176 interstate bookings that we wrote in those offices, 802 were for the Gold Coast and 539 for Brisbane and north to Rockhampton.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for South Brisbane to leave the Chamber.

Mr. BENNETT: With the greatest respect, I refer you to Rule 123A, which says that the Speaker—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! There will be no debate.

Mr. BENNETT: I was not warned this morning.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BENNETT: The request for me to withdraw was invalid, I am submitting—I ask for your ruling on it—because I was not warned.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I have given my ruling.

(The hon. member for South Brisbane withdrew from the Chamber.)

Mr. DEWAR: I was giving the break-up of the total of interstate bookings. The figures for Mackay and Whitsunday were 552, for Townsville and Magnetic Island, 71, and for Cairns and district, 212. Those were the interstate bookings for last month.

The hon. member for Bundaberg referred to the actions of the police in investigating a certain matter that the court referred to as a fraud perpetrated on the court. Investigations of an extensive nature, covering all aspects of the matter, which have been conducted in a purely impartial manner, are almost completed. This investigation has not been made in the light of a slight to the court but as a result of the views expressed by it. The result of the investigation will be forwarded to the Solicitor-General for examination and advice as to what action should be taken.

During the debate a great deal has been said about the Police Force, and I want to conclude with the following comment. The Police Force of Queensland comprises a body of men and women with one task, that of law enforcement for the protection of life and property. In doing that job it will receive the unqualified backing of the Government. However, this Government will not tolerate any situation within the Police

Force in which personnel, individually or in groups, actively promote, to the detriment of the Force, political or denominational views.

A unified Force dedicated to law enforcement can do much for the State in public confidence. A Force divided against itself, with the camps indicated by the hon. member for South Brisbane, is useless to this State. Whether the camp be the "Guild of Mr. Bennett" or any other, it will get no support from this Government. Oblique sniping charges are useless unless backed by facts.

If any member has aught to propose for the good and welfare of the Police Force and the people of Queensland, I shall be pleased to hear it. If, on the other hand, any member of this Assembly has any facts concerning reprehensible or improper conduct on the part of any member of the Force, then I undertake to investigate them fully.

Let every member of the Force recognise that the job of the police is to promote public confidence by realistic law enforcement; it is not to create or support schisms that will ultimately bring the Force into disrepute.

At 4 p.m.,

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 15 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for the Department of Labour and Industry.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to:—

	£
Department of Labour and Industry—	
Chief Office	381,778
Balance of Department, Consolidated Revenue and Trust and Special Funds	13,552,622

Mr. DONALD: Now that the debate on the previous Estimates, during which the hon. member for South Brisbane was suspended, is concluded, I respectfully ask that he now be allowed to return.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The answer is "No."

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS

CHIEF OFFICE

Hon. A. R. FLETCHER (Cunningham—Minister for Lands) (4.1 p.m.): I move—

"That £712,909 be granted for 'Department of Lands—Chief Office.'"

The required appropriation for this financial year is comprised mostly of salaries for the various officers employed in the Chief Office, together with an amount of £354,439 which will be expended on the cost of preparing estates for subdivision into township allotments, business sites, or industrial areas.

During previous financial years the cost of this work was a charge upon the Loan Fund, but in future these works are to be financed from revenue. For this reason, Chief Office requirements for this year are higher than previously. The balance of the Vote is required to cover the cost of postage, fares, and other incidentals.

The annual report of the department sets out in detail our activities during the previous 12 months. The report indicates that the new Land Act, which was introduced towards the end of last year, has been a great success. It is working very well and has been largely instrumental in bringing about a much more harmonious relationship between the Crown and lessees, and between my officers and those with whom they have to deal.

Soon after the introduction of the new law I arranged for the publication of a digest so that the ordinary man in the street would have, in layman's language, a better idea of what was to be done and what was meant by the various aspects of the consolidated Land Act. It will be understood that legal terminology is not always as clear as we might hope it to be.

We have pressed on with our programme of closer settlement. This year 108 grazing leases, or pastoral leases, have already been opened up throughout the State for new settlement. Bearing in mind that land openings were frozen during January and February because of the repeal of one set of land laws and the introduction of another, the opening of 108 blocks in the nine months was quite a commendable achievement and compares more than favourably with the operations of previous years.

Running quickly through the figures during the past 10 years, they are—

	Blocks opened
1953	62
1954	46
1955	75
1956	71
1957	94
1958	57
1959	91
1960	68
1961	83
1962	49

For the seven months of this year, 108 blocks have been opened.

In addition to those 108 blocks, 40 holdings were opened as agricultural selections. The figure for 1963 extends only to 30 September last, but when figures for the full year are available a record will have been established. Incidentally, agricultural selections are in many cases quite small areas of land, and only a few were opened as living areas.

As the annual report shows, we have on hand approximately 4,000,000 acres in the process of subdivision for new settlement, and this is being subdivided into 107 living

areas, 43 of which are suitable for wool-growing and the balance for beef production. In addition, settlement and development in the Fitzroy River Basin Land Development Area will continue as rapidly as we can bring it about. The figures certainly show that the Government is carrying out a quite vigorous programme of closer settlement.

The Fitzroy River Basin Land Development Scheme is proceeding according to schedule, and progress is up to expectations. As a matter of fact, I am very pleased with the progress made there.

The report shows that, up to 30 June last, a total of 960,000 acres had been acquired in that area by negotiation. About one-third of this area was handed back to existing lessees subject to the carrying out of appropriate developmental conditions and a total of 414,000 acres, comprising 45 blocks, has been opened for new settlement subject to fairly severe developmental conditions.

The work of pulling and grassing the scrub areas on the lands open for new settlement is progressing as rapidly as possible having regard to the necessity for carrying out these operations during the suitable months of the year. Hon. members will understand that it is not possible to pull scrub of this type when the ground is completely dry. There is far too much breaking-off of the scrub and undue suckering of the brigalow, with disastrous results. We expect that this year's financial allocation of £1,500,000 made available by way of special Commonwealth assistance will be fully required to meet commitments during the year. As a matter of fact, we may find that it is not enough. Large quantities of fencing material and grass seed have been purchased so that supplies of these items will be available to new producers immediately and cheaply. All seed purchased has been tested by the Standards Branch of the Department of Agriculture and Stock and is of such quality as to ensure that a good strike will be obtained, given suitable weather. It is being stored at a disused powerhouse at Theodore.

The Department of Main Roads has embarked upon a programme of construction and reconstruction to provide high-standard main roads in the area, and satisfactory arrangements have been made with three local authorities for the construction of necessary ancillary roads. Works on these roads and the main roads are being financed out of funds made available from the Commonwealth advance. The provision of good roads is one of the basic requirements of a successful developmental scheme, and we expect to spend between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000 on that important aspect of the project.

Mr. Tucker: Out of the money given to you?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes.

Mr. Tucker: Do you give it to the Department of Main Roads?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes. It is the constructing authority; we do the paying.

Mr. Tucker: It is the constructing authority for the Department of Lands?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes. It is all part of the work done with the developmental funds.

Mr. Houston: Does the Department of Main Roads sub-let any of the contracts?

Mr. FLETCHER: That is the province of that department.

Mr. Houston: You are not interested?

Mr. FLETCHER: I am interested, but I cannot tell the hon. member whether or not they have sub-let contracts.

Mr. Houston: You would not object, whichever method they used?

Mr. FLETCHER: No. They are expert in road development; we hope that we are expert in planning, stocking, and so on.

The provision and maintenance of ancillary access roads is a function of local government; but to ensure that an unfair burden is not placed upon the people of the Fitzroy Basin area, we have agreed to find all costs of local-authority road construction arising out of the implementation of this scheme and will require that local authorities repay only one-third of them. We hope that local authorities will receive sufficient compensation by virtue of the fact that the areas will increase in value and they will receive more in rates. The initial cost of road construction is a very heavy burden, and we thought it fair to bear that cost. The local authorities have agreed to repay one-third of the construction costs.

Mr. Walsh: Will they be built to local-authority standards or to Main Roads standards?

Mr. FLETCHER: A composite of both. They will be built to practical standards, taking into account the type of country. In fact, I do not quite understand the hon. member's interjection. They may not, of course, be bitumen roads. Road standards are not necessarily local-authority standards or Main Roads standards; they are practical standards for the area in which they are built.

Mr. Walsh: There is certainly a difference between local-authority construction and Main Roads construction.

Mr. FLETCHER: Exactly, and there is a difference in standards between one local authority and another. We cannot lay down a standard for all local-authority areas. We expect to get value for our money so far as that is possible.

Mr. Walsh: I wanted you to explain whether or not they would be goat tracks.

Mr. FLETCHER: They will not be goat tracks.

The one-third contribution to be made by local authorities will be repayable as a Treasury loan spread over a period of years.

This developmental scheme is in its infancy, of course, but solid progress has been made during the 10 months of operation. We are pressing ahead with the settlement and development of the area and are confident that next year we will make quite spectacular progress. The scheme should gain momentum this financial year. The beginnings are the difficult periods. An economic evaluation of a further area of about 5·2 million acres of the Fitzroy River Basin land situated north of the central railway in the Mackenzie-Isaacs region has been completed by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Hon. members will remember that that was a preliminary to the first scheme. This is the third area. Areas 1 and 2 are now in the process of being developed. This evaluation shows that the development of the area will bring about something like the same results as the first and second areas, namely, a further substantial increase in beef production. Means of achieving this development are being examined. One of the main problems associated with the development of this region, to a far greater extent than the first area we started on, is the lack of roads in the area, and, to enable further consideration of the development of these lands, the Government has made a request to the Commonwealth that the beef-roads scheme be extended to include, at least in part, the roading of this area. As a result of our going in there, there will be a furthering of the beef production scheme in Queensland.

Mr. Tucker: Is this part of the brigalow area?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes. There may only be a part of it solid brigalow, but the basis of it is the brigalow scheme, and all blocks will be designed so that a large proportion of the high-quality brigalow land will be included in each block. There may be some that will not be so good, and it will be fairly difficult to design.

As the result of conversion of huge tracts of scrub in the Fitzroy River Basin to pasture, it could so happen in the future that we could find ourselves in the position where all the large scrub areas are destroyed with nothing to remind future generations of the scrubs that covered this region. That is something I have not said much about. I may add that to date, I have not received a great deal of encouragement to keep this in its virgin state.

Mr. Walsh: From whom?

Mr. FLETCHER: From anyone, including the hon. member. I have not even publicised this very much, but I have a very strong yearning to keep some of this tremendous brigalow area in its virgin state so that generations that come after us will be able to know what this historical development has done and what sort of a job we had to undertake.

Mr. Walsh: It is a pity the departmental officers did not bring to your notice the 1947 report.

Mr. FLETCHER: Perhaps they did; perhaps I did not take very much notice of it. If there are any other parts of the 1947 report that I have overlooked, perhaps the hon. member will draw my attention to them. I shall be grateful.

Very big areas of scrub are being pulled down and the speed at which it is happening leads one to believe that in 20 years there will not be any considerable amount of it left. The amount of work that is being done is fantastic and the speed at which it is being done gives the feeling that in no time at all the whole area will be denuded of brigalow and perhaps in 20 years there will not be any considerable area left—only little parts here and there that will not be of great value when one takes into account that flora and fauna require a very considerable expanse of country if they are to survive properly.

I have had my officers carefully examine the possibility of doing something in this particular area, and perhaps something further in Area 3 if we get to that stage. At the moment we have in mind some 60,000 acres that I am hoping we will be able to preserve in its absolute virgin state. Although I have not spoken to the National Parks people about it, I have spoken to a few naturalists, including Mr. Fleay, who claimed quite definitely that although 60,000 acres is a lot of land to walk over or drive over, in terms of the preservation of natural flora and fauna, particularly indigenous fauna, a very large area of country is needed to preserve it for ever in its natural state. I do not know how practicable that is going to be, or whether it will be possible to have anything bigger than the 60,000 acres I have mentioned in Area 3, but I am hoping something can be done. Future generations will blame us if we do not do something about it while there is still time. I have already explained that the time we have left is not very great, and something has to be done about this period in history if we are to do it properly.

My department shoulders a tremendous responsibility to the public. Evidence of that is being provided by the way hon. members are listening to my remarks about my department. It is a pretty big job. It is our job to see that our policies help, rather than hinder, in the great task of developing Queensland. At the same time, as I have implied, we must ensure that we do not go too far or too quickly and overlook something, such as the need to preserve some of our virgin scrub in national parks, while we are doing it. We have to lay down a policy that ensures rapid growth and expansion in the future. It is not sufficient for us merely to cater for the needs of the present moment. That would be pretty easy to do.

Our problem is to encourage more intensive usage and the establishment of more and more primary producers on the land. At the same time we are obliged to provide for the land requirements of future generations.

That, of course, conforms with what I have already said about our responsibilities. Land usage for primary production is the basic forerunner of secondary industry, about which we have had a good deal of talking lately and in respect of which it has been claimed that it is very necessary if this State is to be developed as quickly as it should be. Growth in primary industry will ensure expansion in secondary development. It is fundamental to this State that we give high priority to the development of our tremendous heritage of land resources. In fact, we are obliged under the United Nations Charter to do at least our share in achieving world-wide freedom from want. It is part of our obligation at this moment to ensure that the Department of Lands is administered to the end that at least we play our part in this direction.

I think that we are entitled to say that this is not purely a State responsibility. There is an element of national responsibility in respect of our situation in Queensland, especially North Queensland. It is clear that we do not possess all the financial and technical resources necessary to achieve our objective of rapid development. In recognising this in a practical way we have sought and obtained Commonwealth participation and co-operation. We are looking forward to further assistance in that direction.

Limiting my remarks to matters directly concerning me and these Estimates, we have had the Bureau of Agricultural Economics up here looking into two areas in the Fitzroy River Basin. An economic evaluation of about 4,000,000 acres south of the central railway was carried out some time ago and given a certain amount of publicity. I think hon. members know a great deal about what those people said. A similar investigation of an area of about 5,000,000 acres north of the line was finalised during recent months. At the moment the Bureau is examining the agricultural potential of land in the Nogoia and Dawson River systems. Bolstered by the findings of the Bureau—that is, in the Bureau's first report—we were able to win from the Commonwealth substantial financial assistance to push on with the early development of the Fitzroy River Basin.

Mr. Tucker: Is that the third phase you are talking about?

Mr. FLETCHER: That is not the third; that is a separate entity altogether. This is connected with the land resources and the water resources in that area and has to do with the quality of the soil and the possibility of growing such crops as cotton, and any other relevant economic considerations they deem fit to report on. This development ties in with the beef-roads scheme, which will open up our vast cattle-breeding areas. These advantages have resulted from the practical application of a policy of co-operation with our more financial counterparts in the national capital. As everyone knows, they have more financial

reserves than we have. The obligation is on us to bring about a greater awareness of our own particular needs and problems, and results to date clearly demonstrate how successful we can be if our efforts are intelligently and diligently directed. State-wise we have marshalled the technical resources of our own Departments of Land and Primary Industries, under the chairmanship of Sir James Holt, in terms of a land development authority that examines proposals and advises us on the important aspect of rural land development.

The next important problem in the Department of Lands is our land tenure policy. My thinking at the moment is that leasehold has its advantages during the period of initial development. Leasehold, by its nature, is cheaper to the producer, and the nature of this tenure is such that it facilitates the imposition of developmental conditions and their enforcement. When the appropriate stage of utilisation is reached, I think freehold title on reasonable terms and conditions should be available. I have spoken about this matter before. We as a Government are dedicated to a policy of tenure permanence wherever possible, either as perpetual lease or freehold as the individual may prefer, and none can gainsay the practical manner in which this policy is being implemented. I do not think anyone can doubt that we have approached this policy in a practical, simple way, and in a manner that has enhanced the chances of the man on the land making a success and being better able to finance his business through financial institutions.

We approached this matter with a great deal of care and caution, not because we share the view that freeholding is an evil thing, but because we fully realise that all our lands are not yet ready for the granting of absolute title. We recognise the problems that are peculiar to Queensland and agree, I think, that terminable leases are necessary in the grazing and pastoral areas, especially where there is potential for agriculture or further development. As a sort of holding tenure for terminable leases in these areas we granted maximum security of tenure by introducing into the new Land Act a provision that deemed these leases to contain a covenant entitling the lessee of an expired lease to the right to receive an offer of a new lease over the whole or part of his holding. In this way, the lessee of a terminable lease is always assured of the right to an adequate living area which, in fact, is a type of cheap perpetual lease. This action strengthened the leasehold system and bolstered the faith of financial institutions in the security of terminable leases.

At present the conversion of grazing selections to permanent tenure is limited to a living area up to a maximum of 10,000 acres. The upper limit of 5,000 acres was increased to 10,000 acres to extend to those working the larger, but poorer quality, areas the same rights as those enjoyed by the

lessee of the smaller living area. A principle of extending the right of tenure permanence could well be extended to apply to areas in excess of 10,000 acres where the land in question possesses limited or perhaps no potential for increase in productive capacity, and this is a matter which is presently under consideration. This extension would apply only to lands of poor quality that have been reasonably improved having regard to the economics of developing that type of country.

To further the effectiveness of our land tenure policy, all new holdings or renewed leases contain reasonable developmental conditions to ensure that the work of developing the public estate continues at a satisfactory rate. The performance by lessees of lease conditions is under the supervision of our district field officers but, generally, lessees meet their obligations in this regard without the necessity for enforcement action.

The development of the more difficult or remote land is being carried out under the various pastoral tenures, all of which are granted subject to developmental conditions to ensure that, where possible, initial development is carried out to prepare the lands for more intensive usage and settlement later.

Any company or lessee prepared to undertake a substantial programme of development in the pastoral areas is always sympathetically treated. However, it must be recognised that company development in the more productive areas must give place to individual ownership. It may surprise some hon. members to learn that pastoral leases occupy about 60 per cent. of the total area of Queensland and company management of these lands is welcomed on the basis that it is considered that the development of these lands is more the job of the company than of the individual in the difficult situations of the outer areas of Queensland.

Briefly, our policy is designed to bring about progressive settlement and development.

Mr. Walsh: What would you describe as the outer areas of the State?

Mr. FLETCHER: Any area such that a new settler would be taking something of a risk in being asked to undertake at this time the development and the running of a lease of it. It must be remembered that, in the outer areas, 100,000 acres may not be a very big holding but it would require a lot of fencing and, by the very nature of the country, it would be a chancy sort of area, with a rainfall that is a bit of a risk—in some years it does not rain; in other years it rains too much. The history of Queensland has been one where individuals on inadequate areas, or, sometimes, even on adequate areas, have run into a series of bad seasons and have lost their all. It is different with a company that has a great deal more financial backing.

Mr. Walsh: Would you put the Tully lands in that category?

Mr. FLETCHER: I will deal with the Tully lands later.

Mr. Wallis-Smith: Would you say you are more kindly disposed towards individual lessees than to company lessees?

Mr. FLETCHER: I have already said that the development company must, where the land is good enough, be prepared in the long run to make room for individual lessees.

The annual report of my department deals comprehensively with all aspects of administration and therefore there is no need for me to indulge in repetition of that information. However, in view of statements made recently by the hon. member for Mourilyan, who is present in the Chamber, and by the hon. member for Warrego, who is not present at the moment, I want to say something about the grant to King Ranch Development Company Pty. Ltd., of a special lease over an area of about 51,000 acres near Tully for development for cattle-fattening. That was mentioned by the hon. member for Bundaberg.

Mr. Mann: You are giving away the assets of the State.

Mr. FLETCHER: If the hon. member for Brisbane will just be patient, I will endeavour to answer his interjection. There is considerable interest in this area and, if hon. members will bear with me, I will tell them, chapter and verse, exactly what happened up there and what it amounted to. The hon. member for Mourilyan accused me of giving away valuable public land, and he went so far as to say that the quality of the land was so good that £100 an acre could be obtained for some of it. Of course, that is not so, and I must disagree with my friend from Mourilyan. None of this land is worth £100 an acre—and I doubt whether it ever will be, although I might hope so.

Mr. Davies: The hon. member for Clayfield said that it was some of the best land in the Commonwealth.

Mr. FLETCHER: Does the hon. member object to that?

Mr. Davies: No. I am seeking information.

Mr. FLETCHER: If the hon. member will listen to me, I will give him all the information I am able to.

If I omit anything, and hon. members opposite can say that I left out references to any particular subjects, I shall be happy to do what I can to reply to relevant questions. I do not agree with the statement by the hon. member for Mourilyan. It is just not so.

Mr. Byrne: That is only your opinion.

Mr. FLETCHER: It is not. It is the opinion of experts who have analysed the situation with all the yardsticks that they can muster.

Mr. Byrne: Try to get an option on land round Tully and see what you have to pay for it.

Mr. FLETCHER: No part of this land is worth anything like the figure mentioned. If it is worth £100 an acre, why did not someone want it? No-one ever used it.

Mr. Byrne: Do you know that they are asking more than £100 an acre in the North now?

Mr. FLETCHER: I am sure that that is not true. Sugar land might bring £100 an acre, but this is largely swamp land. I shall proceed to tell hon. members opposite what type of land it is. I am prepared to lead them gently by the hand, figuratively speaking, to that area and show them exactly the type of land it is, and if they can convince me that anyone would make an offer of £100 an acre for it, I have no doubt that King Ranch would sell it right now. That would be the best thing to do.

Mr. Tucker: We have all been there.

Mr. FLETCHER: It is a pity hon. members opposite did not go to see this particular area.

Mr. Tucker: We have.

Mr. FLETCHER: Then it does not say much for the acuteness of observation of those hon. members.

Mr. Houston: You know what happened to the last Minister for Lands who went to the Promised Land holding hands, don't you?

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not know anything about that. Certainly someone led hon. members of the Opposition who claim to have been there into the wrong country altogether. I suggest that they were not within 100 miles of this country.

Basically, the company has been given a special lease for a term of 30 years, under the terms of which the company is to develop the whole area within five years by establishing suitable pastures for cattle fattening. That is the basis upon which the lease has been given.

Mr. Tucker: You said it was a swamp a minute ago.

Mr. FLETCHER: No, I did not.

Mr. Tucker: Yes, you did.

Mr. FLETCHER: Some of it is swamp.

Mr. Tucker: It cannot be a swamp of much size, because I have been there.

Mr. FLETCHER: I apologise to the hon. member if I did miss something that he said that was relevant or valuable. I could quite easily have been misled, because other things that he said certainly did not come within that category.

Upon such development, the company may purchase the freehold of the scrub land for £5 an acre, and of the forest for £1 an acre. This is the area alleged to be worth £100 an acre, an area which nobody has ever wanted.

Mr. Byrne: They were asking £30 an acre for scrub land 30 years ago.

Mr. FLETCHER: Not there. When determining an unimproved value, the basis of determination is, of course, sales of comparable lands in the vicinity.

Mr. Mann: How much did you get for the slush fund from King Ranch?

Mr. FLETCHER: I suggest that that is unworthy of the hon. member. It certainly is not in conformity with my land policy. There are no slush funds and no contributions. It is all open and above board.

For the benefit of other hon. members who are interested in this matter, I might say that, where possible, in arriving at the unimproved value the basis of determination is always the sale of comparable lands in the vicinity. The people up there who ascertained the unimproved value of this land for us acted on that principle. It is a principle of valuation that is accepted all over the State and in virtually every civilised country in the world. The land used as a basis when determining the value to be paid by the lessee company was an area of about 960 acres adjoining the King Ranch lease on the south-eastern side, which was formerly P.L.S. No. 2404, Innisfail District. I mention that for the benefit of the hon. member who is writing down the exact description. This lease consisted of about 155 acres of scrub land and 805 acres of forest country naturally and permanently watered by the Murray River. The forest country is slightly better, on the average, than that of the King Ranch lease. During 1961 the lessee of this perpetual lease applied for conversion to freehold, giving as his estimate of the unimproved value 10s. an acre.

Mr. Houston: Who was that?

Mr. FLETCHER: I will get for the hon. member the name and address, and other particulars. Naturally, I have not cluttered up my notes with a whole lot of names and addresses. That will serve as a guide. The hon. member can give it to the boy scout who takes him out there next time. He might not then get into the wrong scrub.

The Crown estimate was 17s. 6d. an acre overall, placing a value of £2 10s. an acre on the scrub country suitable for development for grassing and 10s. an acre on the forest country. The value of the block was determined by the Land Court during November, 1962, at 15s. an acre, which is substantially less than the amount to be paid by King Ranch and certainly nothing like the fictitious figure of £100 mentioned by

the hon. member for Mourilyan. I do not think he should go into the real estate business.

Mr. Byrne: I wish I could.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am sure that many people in the area wish that the hon. member would. Had there been available to us any evidence of sales of similar country for £100 an acre, as suggested by the hon. member, or even £50 an acre, they would certainly have been applied in determining the value of the King Ranch proposal. They would have been applied by the Land Court valuer, and they would have been applied later at the Land Court hearing by those whose responsibility it is to examine the evidence, sum up the situation, and give a decision. The Court determination of 15s. an acre given in November, 1962, was based on a sale in 1961 of a similar block of mixed forest and scrub land, which revealed a value of 8s. 4d. an acre unimproved when the sale consideration was analysed. Having regard to the court's determination of less than £2 10s. an acre for scrub country and less than 10s. an acre for forest country, the proposed sale of similar land to King Ranch Development Pty. Ltd. for £5 an acre for scrub country and £1 an acre for forest country will certainly occasion the Crown no loss. Irrespective of the benefits of development that will flow from this proposition, the Crown in fact will show quite a handsome profit from the sale of the land alone.

Mr. Byrne: Did you make that offer to any other company?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes. I think there were two other companies.

Mr. Byrne: This offer of £5 an acre and £1 an acre?

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not think that the other two companies evinced sufficient interest even to get down to a definite proposal.

Mr. Byrne: Was it ever offered to them at £1 an acre?

Mr. FLETCHER: No, I do not think it ever got to that stage because they would not take it at any price, not even as a gift. They looked at it, and said, "What are you trying to interest us in?"

Mr. Byrne: Who were they?

Mr. FLETCHER: I cannot tell the hon. member the two names. I will get them. I am not sure whether the two are willing to have their names bandied about, but I will give the hon. member the two names privately.

Mr. Byrne: Was Hookers one?

Mr. FLETCHER: Hookers were one of them. They were not interested.

Mr. Byrne: They turned it down? Were they offered it on the same terms as King Ranch?

Mr. FLETCHER: It did not ever get to that stage. They looked at it but were not interested.

At the time when these two statements were made—and I can only refer to them again as loose statements—the land was described as the richest in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Davies: The hon. member for Clayfield said so.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am not sure who said it, but I can assure the hon. member that if he took it as gospel he was being misled.

Mr. Davies: Is the hon. member not entitled to express his opinion?

Mr. FLETCHER: Anyone can. Even the hon. gent can express his own opinion. That description was inaccurate and implied very limited knowledge of the land contained in this lease on the part of the hon. member who gave it. The area leased consists of about 7,000 acres of swampy country, mainly ti-tree, and about 26,000 acres of coastal forest with poor soil. The remainder is rain forest of varying quality.

This is what an expert agrostologist thinks of the land. I am going to quote from an article in "Country Life" published on 17 October last. The agrostologist is Mr. Fabian Sweeney, an agricultural scientist, who, incidentally, is at present with the C.S.I.R.O. in Canberra. The article reads—

"An agricultural scientist, Mr. Fabian Sweeney, who for several years grappled with the fertility problems of North Queensland's coastal belt thinks Queensland will learn a tremendous amount from the work of King Ranch, Tully.

"Mr. Sweeney at present with the C.S.I.R.O. in Canberra inspected the work being done by King Ranch a few weeks ago.

"He said two things had to be remembered; (a) it was extremely poor country, and (b) the soil fertility was low.

"He said it lacked phosphates and was covered with forest and ti-tree. The coastal forest is not so bad, he said, but the ti-tree is terrible.

"Mr. Sweeney said already King Ranch by their very efficient methods have revolutionised land clearing in North Queensland."

Mr. Tucker: The way you are talking now you make us think that King Ranch were idiots to go there, and that we, too, are idiots. But we are not.

Mr. FLETCHER: They are quite courageous in going there.

Mr. Walsh: We do not know the terms of the agreement.

Mr. FLETCHER: I think the hon. member has a fairly good idea of the terms of the agreement.

The article continues—

"Inevitably, it was a long term project and no-one at this stage could forecast how it would turn out because no-one had ever attempted land clearing of this size in the northern coastal belt before."

That expert, who has had previous experience in the North of that type of country, certainly shows beyond any doubt how wide of the mark were the statements made by hon. members.

Mr. Byrne: Do you recollect a statement by the former Minister for Lands that any Minister who gave away forest land in the Tully district was a criminal?

Mr. FLETCHER: No, I do not remember, but I do remember—and I have a cutting from the "North Queensland Register"—that lately Mr. McNamara, chairman of the Cardwell Shire Council, has personally expressed to me that this is a very good thing to do. Although he is a very good friend of mine he tells me he is not of my political persuasion, but he said all over the district up there that it was a very wise and good thing to do. Recently he was chairman of some sort of function that was given for the King Ranch people, at which eulogistic comments were made about the efforts of King Ranch and the effects presumably to flow from this experiment of ours in country which hitherto had not been used.

Mr. Houston: No-one is decrying the project. Don't confuse the issue. You gave it away.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is not the problem with us. There is no problem of giving the land away. The valuation is less than half what we are getting from King Ranch. The valuation was made on the buying and selling prices of land over the last few years. If there is any better way that the hon. member knows of finding unimproved value, would he please let me know? Experts all over the civilized world have been looking for something more reliable for years, but they have not found it.

The development of the various classes of the northern coastal country was considered recently by the North Queensland Land Classification Committee, which was specially appointed by the Government for that purpose. That Committee's report, submitted in 1961, states in part—

"Swampy Country—

The Committee found that there are sizeable areas of both Crown and alienated lands which could be greatly improved by drainage. This would require the attention of Engineers, but at this stage it would appear that the economic aspects of drainage are not likely to be favourable in relation to the returns from beef cattle fattening."

This was in relation to the very area we are talking about.

It continues—

"The Committee accepts that the better type of swampy country which is inundated only temporarily could be useful for beef cattle fattening in the drier portion of the year but such land should be associated with higher country for grazing in the rainy months."

That is precisely what we have been endeavouring to do. There are about 7,000 acres of this type of land in the leased area.

Dealing with the coastal forest country, about 26,000 acres of which are included in this lease, the report goes on to say—

"No evidence was placed before the Committee to show that forest grass land could be developed economically with improved pastures for intensive cattle fattening. This is understandable because forest grass land would have to be cleared of trees and roots to plough depth, the land ploughed and a seed bed prepared to get rid of native grasses and herbage. Regrowth of eucalyptus and wattles would need constant attention. Fertilisers would be required at least in the early stages to build up soil fertility and even if pastures could be established successfully, carrying capacity would be expected to be lower than on the more fertile soils of the rain forest and plain land. Cost of pasture establishment in the last two classes would be lower. It would seem that £25 to £50 per acre would be required to establish improved pastures on forest grass land depending on the cost of operations in dealing with the original stand of timber."

These two land types comprise about 65 per cent. of the leased area, and certainly this further expert evidence, which, I think, is not questioned, removes any suggestion that the land leased to King Ranch qualified for the ridiculous title of "The richest land in the Commonwealth." Indeed, it was land that no-one ever wanted to own. The statement was a patent absurdity. The anticipated costs of the development of the whole area are extremely high. I think most hon. members will concede that it was a fair statement when I said a while ago that I gave King Ranch credit for being pretty courageous. The costs of development are extremely high. An estimate based on present-day clearing and development costs as adopted by the committee of investigation would be—

	£
Scrub clearing and grassing, about 18,000 acres at £22	396,000
Forest and swamp clearing, grassing and draining, about 33,000 acres at £30	990,000
Boundary and internal fencing, yards and dips ..	50,000
Service roads	50,000
	£1,486,000

That does not include living quarters, additional watering points, and the cost of stocking. As hon. members know, stock are not cheap and are not likely to be cheap. On the company's estimate of a total carrying capacity of 20,000 head, capitalisation will be in excess of £2,000,000 and will exceed £100 a beast.

Mr. Byrne: What type of beast will they be running on this ranch?

Mr. FLETCHER: That will be their job to decide. King Ranch have Santa Gertrudis cattle and it is possible that they will have some of them on this land. If the hon. member were to ask me that question in three years' time I might be able to answer it in detail. This is considered to be a very risky proposition, and a very expensive one. I should not like to take it on because I should not guarantee to come out of it on the right side.

Mr. Byrne: Do you consider that they are fools?

Mr. FLETCHER: I am not suggesting that at all. I have said previously, and I repeat, that I think they are showing a lot of courage. I do not think we should run them down. I think we should say to them, as I have said personally, "You are the guinea pigs in this venture. We hope you will be successful; we are not sure you will be, but whether you are successful or not we will learn a great deal from your success or failure." We think it will be very profitable for us to run a test area up there at their expense and gain all the advantages.

Mr. Byrne: Is the capital invested coming from an Australian company or a foreign company?

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not know. Of course, King Ranch is an American company, and for all I know its capital comes from overseas.

The true position is that the land is of poor quality and most expensive to develop. In making this land available to King Ranch Development Pty. Ltd. we are firstly requiring the company to develop the land and to pasture it to our satisfaction, at which stage we are prepared to sell the freehold of the land at about twice the average valuation established by the Land Court, thus taking into consideration the reasonably expected increase in land values that is likely to occur by the time the company becomes entitled to freehold. Statements by the hon. member for Mourilyan that the land is of good quality and that we have conspired to rob our children of their birthright are not too bright and are terribly misleading. In this type of country, the Government is not prepared to experiment with the future of our own men, women and children. There is no way in the world that we would open this land to people who may be misled by statements such as those made by the hon. member for Mourilyan.

Mr. Byrne: Did you offer the land that you granted to King Ranch to any people in the Tully area?

Mr. FLETCHER: We would not do that. That would be murder. We opened two blocks of land in Tully that were infinitely superior to this land. Compared with the land granted to the King Ranch company they comprised good-quality land. One of the settlers had to be removed—

Mr. Byrne: The other one had no capital.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is the point, exactly. No-one could say to him that it was a good enough block to back him; everyone thought it was a risk. It was not something for which the ordinary man could get money and, in the circumstances, he could not get the money because it did not look safe enough although it was 10 times more valuable, on equivalent acreage, than the King Ranch country, which was poor land that nobody was using. We are not prepared to experiment with the future welfare of individual families who could be misled by the type of statements in this Chamber by the hon. member for Mourilyan about the immense value of this very poor land and could dissipate their assets in a very doubtful venture. However, the Government is glad to have the opportunity of demonstrating that, in addition to the infusion of about £2,000,000 worth of capital into the coastal North, the scheme will provide, free of cost to the State, a magnificent and expensive testing ground for the techniques of development of swamp and coastal forest lands.

In the face of evidence presently before us, this type of country is just not suitable at the moment for closer settlement and we are not going to hazard the individual in a situation where it is almost 100 per cent. certain that, under present conditions, he would fail. I think we should be given credit rather than criticism for trying to do something that will enable us eventually, we hope, to put individuals on this country. I am not espousing the cause of overseas capitalists, absentee landlords or company development. My attitude towards that sort of thing is well enough known in this State and elsewhere to free me from any suspicion that this is any sort of a sell-out. It is an honest endeavour to get some answers to a problem part of Queensland's country in the hope that we can use the lessons to advantage in putting individuals onto holdings. I do not have to assure the Committee that I am in the corner of the "owner-driver". I will not have any truck, in ordinary circumstances, with giving valuable land to companies to hold for all time while we have individuals who could, as little capitalists—and I am a little capitalist and a freeholder—make a good living with security and make Queensland a better place for Queenslanders to live in by owning and operating their own blocks. I do not think I need say that again.

Mr. Houston: How many similar-priced blocks are there in that vicinity?

Mr. FLETCHER: There is a lot of land in that vicinity, but I do not want it to be thought that other companies will get in on the same basis. This is a test area, a single operation. Do not think I have not had five or six or a dozen companies wanting the same type of thing. Now that the King Ranch proposal has been agreed to and publicity has been given to it, do not think that I have not been approached by a lot of other companies; but I have not encouraged any of them to think we will be running another test area. This is sufficient.

Mr. Houston: Others wanted the same conditions as those you gave King Ranch?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes, but I am not going to let more companies into the area because this should be sufficient to test what I have said. We want to know whether it is possible to do this. Admittedly, other companies are interested. Tentatively I have suggested that they interest themselves in the wallum country because I think there are parallel conditions in some of our poorer wallum country, where just as derelict a situation is obtaining and nobody is using the land. Following my suggestion to them, some are looking at it. I have said to them, "Go to the wallum country near Maryborough or near Caloundra, or to any other wallum country that is not being used, and we will give you every sort of encouragement." I think I can say that the Government would be prepared to give the same sort of conditions as it gave King Ranch if we could get operations under the same sort of risk out of which we could expect to get some valuable information and, further, out of which we could venture to put individuals on owner-operated blocks of land, which at the moment we cannot do.

Mr. Tucker: There is no real parallel between the wallum country and country of the King Ranch type.

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not concede in respect of this that the hon. member is an authority. He has already demonstrated that he does not know what he is talking about. He has even suggested that he has been to the place and he still thinks it is one of the most valuable parts of the Commonwealth. When an hon. member demonstrates that he does not know the first thing about one part of the country, how can he expect me to take his word that he is an authority on any other part or any similar part?

Mr. Byrne: Did I understand you to say that many companies had applied for this Tully land?

Mr. FLETCHER: Since King Ranch has been given the lease, yes, quite a number of companies.

Mr. Byrne: But prior to the granting of the King Ranch lease?

Mr. FLETCHER: Only two, I think, before that.

Mr. Byrne: But many companies applied to you for something similar and you refused them?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes.

Mr. Davies: Once they knew the prices, several companies wanted it.

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not know how that is arrived at but they probably worked it out that, if King Ranch has learned some things already—and one has only to go up there and look at the place to see that they have learned some things—it possibly is a good thing to have a go at.

In any case, I have explained that this is a risky operation which has been embarked upon by the Government as a test at the expense of someone else. We are not likely to extend it to other land except perhaps the wallum country or some other similar risky area that we know nothing about at the moment. There are many areas of low-lying, infertile country that are not being used through lack of sufficient knowledge and techniques of economic development. We hope that King Ranch can find the answer to the question of how the area can be developed economically.

This type of land lends itself to such an approach. Cost of development will be very high and could well become almost frightening. The project may not be a success, and I do not think that any betting man who had a look at the proposition would give any odds that the company will pull it off. We cannot expect individuals to risk the small amounts that they may have in experiments of this type and we, as a Government, have not the money that will be involved. Companies with the necessary funds and experience can, by their very nature, take advantage of Federal income-tax laws, for one thing. Because they have more finance, they can afford to take risks that individuals could not possibly take.

The company has worked it out, so I have been told, that by controlling a big area and developing in stages they can stock and produce from the area as it is progressively brought into production. As a thousand or more acres are developed, stores can be fattened and the income offset against expenditure. That is what King Ranch hope to do. They say that they will cut their development costs to a great extent by this type of gradual development.

That does not mean that we are not going to insist on complete development before they have any right to freehold the land. Something of a similar nature is happening at Esperance Bay in Western Australia, and the A.M.P. Society in South Australia,

I think,—or Victoria, anyway—is developing tracts of infertile land on much the same principle and with the same desirable results. The risks are too great for individuals, and, if the companies succeed, good luck to them. They will get something and we will get infinitely more; we will get techniques and experience at their expense.

Unfortunately the hon. member for Warrego is not here. He had something to say about this scheme and was very worried about what he called the illegality of it. I have a certain amount of sympathy for him because I remember the debate on this subject in which he did bring forward some points. Section 205 of the Land Act provides that the Governor in Council may issue a special lease over land which, in the opinion of the Minister for Lands, is abnormally costly of development, subject to conditions providing for the development of the land to render it fit for manufacturing, industrial, or business purposes.

The hon. member for Warrego suggested that as the land granted to King Ranch Development Pty. Ltd. was not to be used for manufacturing, industrial, residential or business purposes, the lease granted to the company was illegal.

The word “business” is not defined in the Land Act, but certainly the work of the company in clearing the leased land and developing it to pasture for cattle-fattening is a business for the purpose of the provisions of Section 205. Whilst the word “business” is not defined in the Act, it has been the subject of judicial definition extending back for almost 80 years.

I am informed by someone who has done some research on the matter that Lord Justice Lindley, an eminent English jurist, when referring to the word “business” said—

“The word means almost anything which is an occupation as distinguished from a pleasure—anything which is an occupation or duty which requires attention is a business.”

I am not saying that sometimes business cannot be a pleasure, but that is the definition.

Mr. Duggan: Sometimes pleasure can be a business, too.

Mr. FLETCHER: That may be so.

In another well-known English case, Jessel, Master of the Rolls, gave the following succinct definition of the word—

“Anything which occupies the time, attention, and labour of a man for the purpose of profit is business.”

Having regard to these and other authorities, there is no room for doubt that the development of land for grazing and coastal fattening purposes falls clearly within the ambit of “business” as set out in Section 205 of the Act. There are in the books of the department about 8,000 special leases standing good, and it is estimated that about 5,000 of these were granted for grazing purposes under the power of the Governor in Council to grant a special lease for manufacturing, industrial, residential or business purposes. The granting of special leases over grazing lands has been common practice since the tenure of special lease was created, and if the lease granted to King Ranch is illegal, which it is not, approximately 5,000 other special leases would also be illegal.

In advancing the argument that the special lease granted to King Ranch Development Pty. Ltd. was illegal, the hon. member for Warrego referred to the debate that took place on the application of Section 205 during the passage through the Chamber of the new Land Act towards the end of last year. It is true that at that stage there may have been some misunderstanding about the application and interpretation of that particular section. Perhaps I ought to confess quite humbly that I, too, did not completely understand the extent to which Section 205 could be stretched.

The Bill that gave rise to that debate was one of the most important and comprehensive legislative measures ever introduced into this Chamber. It contained a total of 385 clauses and consolidated land law that had not been reviewed for 52 years. It was a fairly sticky situation to handle.

During the consideration of the Bill in Committee, the hon. member for Warrego and his colleagues were searching the Bill for provisions dealing with the Fitzroy River Basin Land Development Scheme in the knowledge that an agreement had been entered into between the State and the Commonwealth a short time before the debate. When the hon. member for Warrego questioned me on the application of Section 205, he was again referring to the leasing of large areas of brigalow scrub, and knowing that the nature of the brigalow scheme was such that special legislation would be required—in fact, I had given instructions for the drafting of a special Bill—I had no hesitation in assuring him that Section 205 would not be applied in the case of large areas of scrub land. I felt safe in giving that assurance in the knowledge that a new tenure, to be called a purchase lease, was being introduced especially to deal with the development of the brigalow lands in the Fitzroy River Basin area.

Furthermore, the provisions of Section 205 were not new but merely a consolidation of the section taken from the repealed Act, and in that knowledge I did not take the hon. member's question as seriously as perhaps I should have. At that time I was aware that

the consolidated provisions of the new Section 205 had been used only in the case of the reclamation and development of lands in the vicinity of towns and cities, and I did not foresee that the provisions of the section would be used in connection with the King Ranch proposition, which at that time was in the proposal stage and under investigation by the Commission. A decision to grant a lease to King Ranch Development Pty. Ltd. was not made until May, 1963. At the time of the debate on Section 205, that is, November, 1962, the question of the type of lease that might be granted to King Ranch Development Pty. Ltd. had not arisen, and, frankly, I was of the same mind as was the hon. member for Warrego when he stated in the Chamber recently that such a lease could not be granted under that section. In fact, I gave him that assurance in good faith in the light of facts available to me at that stage.

Mr. Walsh: What do you want us to do—accept your apology for not knowing?

Mr. FLETCHER: That could be so. I hope I am a fairly honest fellow.

However, some months later, when the Government decided that the King Ranch proposition was a worthy project, the Commission was faced with the question of the appropriate lease to be granted in the circumstances. It recommended that the lease be granted under Section 205 and, on the advice of the department's Chief Land Court Advocate, was able to satisfy me that this was the appropriate section under which the lease should be granted. The question of whether or not special legislation should be introduced was considered at the time, but it was decided that this was not warranted.

The hon. member for Warrego may rest assured—I am sorry that he is not in the Chamber to hear this—that the lease granted to King Ranch Development Pty. Ltd. is valid. If in any way I unwittingly contributed to the confusion in his mind on this point—perhaps it could be called making confusion worse confounded—I should like him to accept my apology.

The Government's policy of encouraging the conversion of leaseholds to permanent tenure either as agricultural farm, a freeholding tenure, or perpetual lease selection, has resulted in the conversion of a total of 1,133 selections to either freeholding tenure or perpetual lease selection. This figure does not include town lands and represents a total area of 89,757 acres up to 3 June last. The total area is not as high as it might be, but this is caused by the fact that until six months ago the maximum area that could be freeholded was 5,000 acres. The new Land Act, which came into operation as from 1 January last, increased this maximum from 5,000 to 10,000 acres, which should result in a larger converted area during the next 12 months.

The scheme launched to combat *Harrisia* cactus at Collinsville is progressing most satisfactorily and the overall results to date have been very encouraging. It can be said that due to our intervention the spread of *Harrisia* cactus has been controlled and we can be optimistic about our future efforts. Much new work and follow-up work still remain to be done, of course, but the techniques developed in the area have proved that infested country can be economically brought under control and the huge areas now covered with introduced pastures are proof positive of the effectiveness of our endeavours.

This has been a joint Government-landholder operation of very significant dimensions. We are quite proud of it. The heavily infested areas are being cleared at Government cost, and the scattered infestations are being cleared up by lessees, encouraged by concessional leases and assisted by applied research. To date, 182,000 acres of scrub has been destroyed by landholders to control and eradicate this pest, and that is a significant area of land. Weedazol 616, a new hormone weedicide, has displaced arsenic pentoxide as a destroying agent and has removed a lot of the tedium and, in fact, danger from the operation.

The biological section of my department is furthering its very valuable research work in the overall battle against the many pest plants that, if left unattended, would whittle down the productive capacity of our lands. Progress in this field is naturally not always sudden and spectacular. On the contrary, the finding, breeding and release of pest-destroying insects can be time consuming, and the way is often fraught with many setbacks and disappointments.

However, the advantages in biological control compared with mechanical or chemical means are so great that we feel that every effort should be made to pursue this work. Who knows? A dramatic breakthrough such as was made in the early days with the prickly-pear pest could be at hand to conquer some of our other serious pests.

The annual report shows that the Survey Office had another busy year—too busy, because we have had to put the weight of the brigalow development right on its shoulders. It is difficult and slow work. We have had to send out bulldozers to drive tracks through the scrub, which hon. members will understand is a serious brake on the efforts of these officers and slows up work considerably. Altogether, 273 rural portions and 949 township allotments with an aggregate area of 1,197,194 acres were surveyed for selection or sale, and 455 miles of new roads were also surveyed. In addition, three field parties equipped with electronic distance-measuring instruments (called tellurometers) were engaged in work associated with the mapping of the Proserpine and Midge Point

areas and in establishing a high-accuracy network of control points between Anakie and Ayr to provide accurate starting points for the mapping of that region.

A start has been made on the production of a new series of four-mile and two-mile sheets, which will conform in projection with that adopted by the National Mapping Council.

Aerial photography has been accepted as an essential adjunct to both surveying and mapping, and to avoid any duplication or overlapping it is now the practice for the aerial photo requirements of all State departments to be co-ordinated each year by the Survey Office and a single contract subsequently let therefor. Last year's State air photo contract comprised 27 areas totalling 14,412 square miles, while the State air photo coverage obtained to date exceeds 160,000 square miles. As the Commonwealth Government also requires aerial surveys in connection with its mapping programmes, liaison is maintained to ensure that there is no overlapping or duplication of Commonwealth and State air photo undertakings. Copies of 235,378 aerial photographs are now stored and indexed in the Air Photo Library maintained in the Survey Office, and these are very much in demand. An inspection of the aerial photographs of an area is now the first move in any developmental project, and some indication of their use can be gauged from the fact that last year 44,785 photographs were processed for official and outside requirements.

To keep pace with scientific advances, both in the field and in map production, the Survey Office is kept informed on new techniques and equipment. Last year new equipment designed to reduce the cost and tedium of map production was installed. This included a drawing machine producing traceable enlargements or reductions of plans and diagrams, and a photo-type lettering machine providing "stick-on" printing, which in future will replace the old-style hand lettering on all two-mile and four-mile maps, and on all single town maps. Progress is being made with the production of topographic maps. Topographic field survey parties have been established and equipped with modern instruments and electronic distance-measuring equipment at a cost of about £32,000 per party. Additional office equipment at a cost of about £75,000 has been provided in the provision of stereo-plotting equipment necessary to produce maps from aerial photographs and the data supplied by these field parties.

During 1945, the National Mapping Council was constituted to bring closer together the mapping authorities of the various States and the Commonwealth. The function of this council is to co-ordinate

mapping on a national basis and to determine approved methods and minimum standards of accuracy for surveys and mapping.

I notice that the hour is getting late and I do not want to take up too much time of the Committee. However, I am flattered at the interest displayed by hon. members. I should have liked to make a few remarks about my ministerial responsibilities, which extend to the Co-ordinating Board and the Rural Fires Board. These administrations will be of interest to those representing rural districts. But in view of the time already taken I think that perhaps it would be more appropriate if I waited to comment on those aspects of my departmental activities until the inquiries, which no doubt will arise during the debate, are made of me.

I should like to mention again the advantages that have followed from the recent consolidation of the law relating to the administration of Crown lands. The new Act has proved a big help to my department and the legal profession. That fact has very often been brought to my notice by members of that profession. Perhaps most important of all is the help it has been to the man on the land who can now, to a very much greater extent than hitherto, understand the law relating to his lease or his land generally. It was a pretty big job but I think it was worth doing because of the advantages that have already been so evident. My officers are to be congratulated. They have done a sterling job in implementing what I think has already proved to be a pretty good Act. I have been extremely lucky to succeed to a lot of very able, conscientious and devoted gentlemen in my office. To them I feel I should say, "Thank you very much for the help you have been over the last year."

I look forward with confidence to implementing the provisions of an Act that is easily understood by the administrative officers and the men on the land. In the last few years I have had a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction in meeting, on a very co-operative and harmonious basis, a large cross-section of the men on the land who have come to my office, sometimes to upbraid, sometimes to take exception, but, to a very much greater extent than when I first took office, to say they are satisfied, or reasonably satisfied, with their treatment.

Mr. Duggan: One fellow told me he came not to praise you, but to bury you.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. gentleman has been seen in some peculiar company, and that is just an illustration. I suggest to him that we are known by the company we keep.

In conclusion, I invite the comments of hon. members. I am sure that most of them will be very favourable.

Mr. BYRNE (Mourilyan) (5.21 p.m.): I listened very attentively to the Minister this afternoon and I console with him in his efforts to shed copious tears for a big company, King Ranch Development Coy. Pty. Ltd., which is coming into Queensland with the idea of helping us good Queenslanders, investing all its money here, and not taking anything out! The Minister placed great emphasis on that, time and time again. He said, "I do not see how they will make a profit out of this; the fact of the matter is, I would not take it on and I should be very sympathetic to anyone who did." Yet, as Minister, he has said that he wants more and more producers on the land to ensure the expansion of our secondary industries. That is perfectly true. That is what we want and that is what I have been struggling to do over the many years I have been in Parliament. We want more and more producers on the land to ensure the expansion of our secondary industries, and the only way to do that is to put our people on the land. That is what we want, and on that point I am in agreement with the Minister. However, how can we put more of our people on the land when we give away 51,000 acres of perhaps some of the best land in Queensland, if not in the Commonwealth? It has been described in that way by men with knowledge of the cattle industry, and by others.

I think it would be perfectly proper to quote from a recent statement in the report of the committee of inquiry into the sugar industry, which recently went overseas. The area I am referring to is situated between Cardwell and Tully, in the vicinity of the King Ranch property. The people who make these recommendations are not fools and, when they make statements about the value of land, we are entitled to take some notice of them.

This is what the committee said at page 64 of its report—

"Possibly the largest available area of suitable cane growing land in the State is between Cardwell and the southern boundary of the Tully cane area."

Remember that Cardwell and Tully are only 30 miles apart and that King Ranch is between the two. The report goes on to say—

"Extension of cane growing on this land"—

and cane-growing land, of course, is first-class land—

"... would push the Tully boundary south and take advantage of the potential which exists in the presently sparsely settled district.

"If expansion of cane growing in the Tully area is undertaken, the Murray Upper district would appear to offer the greatest promise for new cane farms in that mill area."

The area referred to adjoins, or almost adjoins, King Ranch. So here is the committee of inquiry saying what wonderful land, suitable for cane production, is in the vicinity of the area that the Minister is shedding crocodile tears over and calling useless, and saying he is sorry for anybody settling on it.

He says it is no good but this committee of inquiry tells us straight out that it is suitable for cane production. What kind of land do you want for cane production? You do not want swampy land, although some have made a success of swampy land. But right in our own area we have some of the best lands available and the Minister wants to shed tears over this foreign company that is coming in and that is going to leave all its money here and take nothing away. Who would believe that? Would any sensible hon. member subscribe to that?

A Government Member: Your own Cardwell Shire Council did.

Mr. BYRNE: I will tell the hon. member what the Cardwell Shire Council did and what its chairman told the Minister and Sir Rupert Clarke. He said that some wrong impressions had possibly been created by the emphasis placed on the development of this area as a "pilot-block" for cattle-fattening in the wet tropical areas. He told the Minister and Sir Rupert Clarke that, long before King Ranch had evinced any interest whatsoever in this area, the soundness of fattening cattle in the Tully district had well been proved. If the Minister knew that, I want to know: did he raise any objection or dispute it, or did Sir Rupert Clarke dispute it?

Mr. Fletcher: There is a lot better land in the Tully district than this. There is good land in the Tully district but this is not it.

Mr. BYRNE: I realise there is good land in the area. Adjacent to what the Minister has given away almost for nothing, there is land suitable for cane production, and cane production requires reasonably good land. My information is that the Minister was also told by the chairman of the Cardwell Shire Council that there were already more than 12,000 acres in the shire planted with high-quality improved pastures turning off prime fat cattle in quick time and carrying a beast or two to the acre or better. He said that, in addition to these improved pastures, local graziers had for many years successfully fed and fattened cattle on natural grasses, some of these graziers utilising much of the area now leased to the King Ranch Company. He expressed the view that the loss of these occupation licence areas could seriously disrupt the beef production of that particular area. If the Minister knew these facts, he should not have gone on with the proposal and, if he did not, he should have questioned them at the time. My information is that he did not question them.

I believe this to be the worst case ever of land manipulation in Queensland, if not in the whole of Australia. For donkeys' years in this Parliament I have been stressing the necessity for opening up these lands for the purpose of settling our young people, to enable them to make a living and to raise their families, as the Minister says he wants to settle them. That is not being achieved by accepting the proposition of a foreign company, to the disadvantage of our own people.

Why was this done in a hush-hush manner? Did anybody know what applicants there were? I know of only one mentioned by the Minister, but there may have been others interested. For some reason or other, King Ranch has been selected for this class of land. Whether there was a better proposition from anyone else the Minister has not told us. All he has said is that subsequent to the granting of the 51,000 acres to King Ranch he received numerous applications and turned them all down. Fancy that!

Mr. Fletcher: I told you that.

Mr. BYRNE: Prior to making this grant to King Ranch he had certain applications of which we know nothing, and subsequent to it he has turned down other applications from big companies.

I want to know why our own people were not told what the Government proposed to do to give them an opportunity, even if they had to form a company of their own, to enter the grazing industry. Do not run away with the idea that Tully is a poor area and that such a proposition could not be financed. I draw attention to the fact that there are likely to be approximately 7,000 acres of land granted for cane assignments. I base that on a figure of 68,000 acres to the northern sugar mills of the 10 sugar-milling companies. If each new grower were given 1,000 tons of cane, 175 would be needed to provide the quantity of cane required for only one mill. On the assumption that a living area is 1,000 tons and only 50 per cent. of new assigned land is given to new growers, there would be 80 or 90 additional growers in the industry, which would be a wonderful thing for the district. Imagine that number of new growers on sugar lands that the committee of inquiry decided could be provided in the area between Cardwell and Tully.

That will be appreciated because it will settle our own people and provide employment. It will give opportunities to men to go on the land with their wives and families and produce an essential commodity.

The Minister has claimed that King Ranch Development Pty. Ltd. is foolish and will not make a success of it.

Mr. Fletcher: Fair go! I did not say that.

Mr. BYRNE: The Minister told us that he had sympathy for them.

Mr. Fletcher: That is not saying that they will fail. I protest at that.

Mr. BYRNE: The Minister intimated that they were a lot of mugs coming in.

Mr. Fletcher: No, I did not. I said that they were courageous.

Mr. BYRNE: The Minister had sympathy for them and did not think that they could make a success of it. He doubted it.

Mr. Fletcher: You are not being fair.

Mr. BYRNE: I think I am. I think that those are the words that he used. The point is that his Government has no right to take our land and give preferential treatment to a foreign concern. We do not want these hole-in-corner methods in the disposal of public lands. They belong to the people.

Mr. Nicklin: There was nothing very hole-in-corner about it. There was a great deal of talk about it.

Mr. BYRNE: No, but you did not give people in the North an opportunity to take up the land. The Minister admitted that it was never offered to people in the Tully area as individuals. I asked him, "Were any individuals offered any of the land granted to King Ranch?" and he said, "No."

Mr. Fletcher: You are not being fair. You said "in the exact terms".

Mr. BYRNE: No, I did not. I said, "Was any other individual offered any of the land that you have now granted to King Ranch?"

Mr. Fletcher: You said "in the same terms".

Mr. BYRNE: The position to which I have referred is very serious. There is nothing to prevent the Minister from going to another area in Queensland tomorrow—say, out into the Far West—and saying to another company—let us call it the Argentine Company, the Brazilian Company, or something such as that—"Here we have a grazing property for sheep or cattle. We are not going to tell anybody about it. You come along and make an offer for it and it is yours." It will be given to that company at a rental which, if it is as low as the rental in this case, will be a disgrace to the members of the board who recommend it. If the Minister can do this with the Tully lands, he can do it with land round Windorah, Charleville, or Cunnamulla. If he can do it once he can do it again, and I should like to hear from him in his reply whether he proposes to do it again. If he does, I say to him that I think it is wrong, particularly when a foreign company is involved.

If the Minister wants to give away land in this area, let him give it to me. Why should we stay in Parliament when the Minister could give us 1,000 acres of good sugar-growing land in the Tully Valley? A royal commission into the sugar industry said not so very long ago that it would be possible to build six or seven sugar mills in the Tully

Valley and they could be supplied from cane grown on suitable scrub land. It has been amply demonstrated that the land is some of the best in Queensland. That cannot be denied.

Dealing with land values, 40 years ago Brice Henry and others were getting £40 an acre for their land.

Mr. Fletcher: That was good land; not this land.

Mr. BYRNE: It was not very far from it.

Mr. Fletcher: It could be next door and still not be similar.

Mr. BYRNE: The Minister is trying to tell me that similar land is worth only £1 an acre. The royal commission into the sugar industry held 10 years ago, and the committee of inquiry that has recently concluded its investigations, told us that the land is suitable for cane-growing. It cannot be denied that some of it is swampy land, but about 20,000 acres is as good as any land one could find in Australia. As I say, the Minister is giving it away for £5 an acre. Why are we here working for salaries as members of Parliament? We would be on the pig's back on that land up there.

The Minister's predecessor in office made a public statement to the effect that anybody who gave away the good lands at Tully would be a criminal and should be prosecuted, and he has reiterated that statement from time to time. The Minister knew that when he entered into this agreement. He had before him my speeches in this Chamber asking him to open these lands for settlement and information from the shire council telling him that people had already improved 12,000 acres in the area. He also knew that it had been producing cattle for donkeys' years. In spite of all this, he gave it to King Ranch Development Pty. Ltd. What is that company going to do with the land? It will improve it to a certain extent, then subdivide it and sell it. It would sell not at £1 an acre, or £5 an acre, not at £20 an acre or £30 an acre, but at considerably more. Although I know the Minister is a fine chap personally and would not be associated with anything wrong, I think he did not take sufficient care or show sufficient business acumen in arranging the deal with King Ranch. I think his officers were wrong and I do not think they are entitled to any commendation for doing what has been done. Doing this while Parliament was not sitting was altogether wrong as we had no opportunity of discussing the matter with the Minister beforehand.

I make these statements in a good sense; I am not trying to be nasty or do things I would not ordinarily do.

Mr. Fletcher: More in sorrow than in anger?

Mr. BYRNE: I am certainly angry with the Minister for taking away the right of

our people in Tully to occupy this land that he gave King Ranch for nothing and at the same time asserting that he wants to see more and more producers on the land. That means men, women and children, and facilities of every kind, because that will ensure the expansion of secondary industries. Whilst saying those things the Minister does exactly the opposite. That is why I am angry. Our local people should have had the opportunity of getting on to this land, which the Minister and his Government have denied them. They have been denied what I consider is their natural heritage.

Mr. RAE (Gregory) (5.42 p.m.): I have listened with great interest to the expressions of opinion of the hon. member for Mourilyan, but I must disagree with him on the ground of the unsoundness of his remarks. He expressed with great emphasis what he said was the thinking of the Tully people.

Mr. Davies: He has lived there all his life.

Mr. RAE: I will accept that, but the point is that, in allowing the King Ranch people to come into this State in the way they have, we as a Government have clearly indicated that we want to see development in a manner which I am sure will reflect very strongly the wisdom of the Government, and also help considerably the development of Queensland.

Mr. Byrne: Do you want people to go out to the West?

Mr. RAE: To draw that parallel is foolish; it has no bearing on the matter and would indicate that the hon. member is not really sincere in what he says.

Mr. Davies interjected.

Mr. RAE: I will debate land matters with the hon. member, or anybody else on that side of the Chamber. I give full credit to the King Ranch organisation. No matter what they have undertaken in this State they have done very well. We can go right through the whole of their properties, and never in our history have we seen such a magnificent plan of progress and the development of Queensland lands in the correct manner. They really know what they are doing. They have, under wise directorship and with knowledge, come in and shown us quite openly how we can achieve results if given the opportunity. The helping hand extended to King Ranch represents one of the healthiest and greatest moves ever made in this State.

Mr. Walsh: You do not believe that.

Mr. RAE: I do. Their board of directors is composed of Sir Rupert Clarke, Mr. Bailleau, the late Sir Samuel Hordern—no man would have done more than he did in land development—Mr. Kleberg, and other men of eminence in the pastoral industry.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. RAE: They won't go broke. They will open up avenues that will be rewarding to this State. It is a first-class contribution. I only wish we were in a position to avail ourselves of their interest in the development of Queensland in more avenues, because they are doing a very good job.

In land matters there are many points of interest that come to my mind, one of which is the general fairness of the present policy. Obviously land development is important to Queensland. At the moment I feel that the big man, and the middle-man who has a reasonable earning capacity, are adequately catered for but, in my opinion, for far too long there have been those who have been saddled with an inadequate area. As a Government we should take stock of this fault. I will admit that it is a heritage from former administrations. I hate decrying all the time what has been done. At the same time I always like to say anything that I think may be of some benefit to those people who are responsible for the development of Queensland. As we look into the present land policy we find that we have on one side stud leases and pastoral leases, and on the other hand we have the living areas as established either by this or the previous Government. We have people who are without doubt, suffering an intolerable handicap because they cannot hope to make a living out of the land they occupy. I wish to draw a few comparisons so that perhaps, as a Government, we can recognise how in fairness we should provide some form of alleviation.

What is being done about stud leases is not only disturbing to me but the present set-up is worrying quite a number of people in the western areas. I wish to refer to the latest move that has been made by a very responsible and, indeed, outstanding firm, F. S. Falkiner & Sons. These people already have done more for the pastoral industry in land development than any others. Without a doubt Falkiners have done a grand job in sheep breeding. It is an outstanding organisation backed by people who know the score. The administration, directorship and management leaves nothing to be desired. They have done wonders for the sheep men of the State, and, indeed, of every other State. While they have done a good job and have provided first-class stock to keep Australia in the position it enjoys in sheep and wool, certain manoeuvres have been accepted by the Queensland Department of Lands which I believe are most peculiar and very wrong. I will put it this way: they can purchase a property which was advertised for some weeks—indeed months—by every medium to encourage interest in this grazing homestead lease, they can fly out there a week before the advertised time of auction, and through some establishment which must

have been recognised by the Department of Lands in Queensland before they went out—

Mr. Byrne: They got prior knowledge.

Mr. RAE: Without doubt. This is the part that upsets me: how could they be granted the privilege to quietly negotiate a deal?

An Opposition Member: That is what happened with King Ranch, but you condemn it now.

Mr. RAE: It is a different set-up altogether I am speaking now and the hon. member can speak about King Ranch later.

The point is that the Falkiner interests held in the Longreach district a distributing centre known as Cleeve. They then bought Coolagh homestead. After Coolagh they bought Springleigh and they have now purchased Granby. All these dealings savour of a set-up indicating that there is indeed a great avenue for trafficking in land, which is accepted by the Government of which I am a member, and with which I am concerned and confused. It is not good enough!

Mr. Duggan: Why do you say that it is a good department?

Mr. RAE: The Minister will have an opportunity to answer. I am not supplying any of my thinking to the hon. gentleman. I am waiting to hear the answer from the Minister. I can assure the Chamber that this has occasioned quite a lot of worry and frustration for the people living in my area. They are very concerned about this. How can we allow this trafficking in land from grazing homestead to special lease and pastoral lease, plus stud lease that this company can get away with?

In all fairness to the development of Queensland, right in the heart of the area I have mentioned—Granby, Blackall—are some of the finest studs in the State. These studs and other studs enjoying stud leases and pastoral leases are doing a good job. I will name some of them: Isis Downs, Portland Downs, Barcardine Downs and Minnie Downs, which will lose a portion of its area. We have allowed certain purchasing rights. However, Springleigh is a stud lease and already it has no fewer than 1,000 cattle on it; not a bad earning capacity on top of stud sales and flock sheep. I think this is all wrong. I have no time for that form of development. There should be more wisdom, more deep-down clarification and consideration with respect to moves such as we have seen in the purchase of Granby by Falkiners, almost a snide operation, and recognised as such by almost everybody in the Central West.

We have good studs—studs that have been for years purchasing the best of stock, first-quality rams right through, in a sincere

endeavour to maintain and preserve the line and the standard of quality essential for the prosperity of the Queensland grazier.

Overnight we see this shocking indictment on my own Government, of permitting a form of trafficking in lands by people who have no more right to do it than the man in the moon. It is quite wrong and I say so with all the vehemence at my command because I am speaking as one representing the feeling and the knowledge of people who live in the area.

Mr. Duggan: That is very strong criticism coming from a Government member.

Mr. RAE: This is a fair Government, quite open to accept my criticism just as the Leader of the Opposition might get a caning from his members.

Mr. Duggan: I concede that, but it is a very serious thing for a Government member to say it is a shocking indictment on the Government.

Mr. Davies: And snide operations!

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Tooth): Order!

Mr. RAE: If we are to continue on the right plane of thinking with respect to land matters and the development of Queensland, we must take every possible step towards granting additional areas to those people who have been plagued with an inadequate area for far too long. I have said it before and as long as I am in Parliament I will forever fight for the right of the people who live in those areas. Heavens above, many of them have a shocking set-up at the moment! It could easily be altered and made attractive with little or no damage being done to those who enjoy an adequate area alongside.

I am talking again of the people in the Urandangie, Boulia, Kynuna, Winton, Longreach, Stonehenge, Jundah, Eromanga, Windorah, Quilpie, Toompine and all those other western areas.

Few of them require additional areas but we must as a Government undertake to do something for them, to be positive rather than accepting the power of purchase as the right of some people, and refusing at all times to look into the problems of those who have not something commensurate with a fair thing from a fair Government. I ask the Minister and his officer sincerely to hearken well to my words because there is every justification for my expressions in this field. We are not going ahead in the manner that we should be; we are still abiding by some rather painful and sad associations with a previous Government.

Whilst on this subject, I feel that I should bring to the notice of the Committee that, whilst many of these companies have in the past been responsible for quite a lot of

development of the potential of the land, much more could have been done under the leases granted to them.

I feel that we as a Government are encouraging those who are doing much but, by the same token, we are taking away some of the interests held by many of the larger companies. I feel that some reference should be made to the Scottish Australian Company, which recently celebrated its centenary. For 100 years it has enjoyed a magnificent title to this particular area. I agree that it has done much, but when one really looks into it one will find that really very little has been done compared with what would have been achieved by people working their own properties with the will to succeed. This company has had Bowen Downs Stud under its management for some time. It advertises in the various newspapers that it is a stud, and the interesting point is that it claims that its rams are bred from Uardry and Wawhoon rams. In fact, it has not bought a ram from Uardry since 1939. What a fantastic sales gimmick this is!

I say that something should be done about taking these lands and giving them to people who will do a job on them. I should like to see Bowen Downs cut up and established with new selectors. New blood is important in that area.

Another thing that disturbs me is our present system of deciding eligibility to enter land ballots. I have had an opportunity of discussing this matter with the Minister, and after a discussion that I had with him this morning I must say that I now have a greater understanding of the reasons for the introduction of the present system. However, in the light of all that, I still believe that we have not found the answer to problems arising from land ballots. I do not agree with the open ballot system, either. In my opinion, we could do much to overcome the problems by appointing trained personnel to do a particular job, men who could be of great assistance to the department. The Minnie Downs block, for which a panel of three is responsible is coming up for ballot. The panel has rejected about 45 per cent. of the applications. Making due allowance for the knowledge of these men, does not that indicate that there is something wrong, something not in line with fair thinking? The Minister assured me that the applicants can come down to Brisbane and be interviewed. I was pleased to hear that; I think it will clear the air. As the person who was with me this morning pointed out to the Minister, many men are not qualifying for the ballot for these blocks because one of the conditions is that they must have been in close association with the pastoral industry in the previous three years. The pattern of life has forced some of the men to seek other jobs in order to obtain sufficient money to feed, clothe and educate their children, and I do not think they should be disqualified for that reason alone. Surely it is possible to overcome

all the difficulties in a sensible way by appointing a panel of men who live in proximity to the area that is coming up for selection. This, I do think, would aid the department and would be a measure of assistance to it.

(Time expired.)

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) (7.22 p.m.): We have just listened to what I think is one of the most remarkable speeches that I have heard in this Chamber for some time. It contained one of the most scathing indictments of the Government and its land policy that I have heard since the hon. member for Fassifern spoke here three years ago. The hon. member for Gregory spoke—as he said, he is able to speak on this if he sees fit—about trafficking in land and rackets in land.

Mr. Rae: I did not mention the word "rackets".

Mr. TUCKER: We will be able to look at the proof of his speech and see what he said. He mentioned trafficking in land and malpractices associated with land.

Mr. Rae: I did not mention rackets.

Mr. TUCKER: I did not hear the whole of his speech, but it was very obvious that he was speaking about the power of the purse—the fact that big men, because of the power of their purses, were able to override small men on the land. I challenge the hon. member to deny that he said that. He deplored the fact that trafficking in land was taking place in the area that he represents. As I listened to him it appeared to me that he could well be sitting on this side of the Chamber, because he put up a wonderful case in support of Labour's ideas and ideals in regard to land. We believe that land should be held for posterity and should not be put into the hands of big land barons; the hon. member for Gregory said that this, in fact, was taking place in his electorate. That is why the Australian Labour Party has advocated over the years that we should continue to grant leasehold tenures—so that future generations will have some say in the use of the land in Queensland. We have had a perfect example during this debate of the way in which it has been free-traded away. Because of the power of the purse, it can go into the hands of one, two, or three land barons. As I say, the hon. member for Gregory was here this evening to add strength to our arguments as to that very matter. His remarks reminded me of a note I made from "Hansard" of what was said by the hon. member for Fassifern three years ago, namely, that in some instances holdings have grown from horse paddocks to sheep stations. Hon. members on this side accept what the former Minister for Lands said and, this evening we heard the hon. member for Gregory, by implication, confirm those remarks.

Mr. Ewan: Your Government gave starvation areas.

Mr. TUCKER: The hon. member for Roma interjects that our Government gave starvation areas. In reply to that, I say that the hon. member for Roma did all right as today he is virtually a millionaire as a result of our land policy. I do not see that he is down to his last penny or half-penny—not at all. I suppose he could write a six-figured amount in his cheque book. Anyway, the hon. member for Roma speaks from the Gold Coast on most occasions.

The hon. member for Gregory this evening supported A.L.P. policy in regard to leasehold tenure for land. The Minister stated this afternoon that we have a responsibility to future generations. I made a note of that because I quite agree with him. It is true that we have a responsibility to future generations. We were about to applaud the Minister for that statement, but later on, he came again, backwheeling in the way he does and advocated a freehold tenure for land. He cannot have it both ways. He cannot say in one breath that we have a responsibility to future generations and in the next advocate selling the land to build up tremendous aggregations.

Evidently he may be duping a number of people for a start but the hon. member for Gregory has amply demonstrated how, with freehold tenure, the land can eventually wind up in few hands.

When the Minister said that we have a responsibility to future generations he was probably not trying to be untruthful in his statement but he certainly got on the wrong track. I do not think he knows where he is going in relation to the administration of the Department of Lands in this State. I am not here to pat him on the back and praise him for his policy. I think he is doing a terrible injustice to the people of this State in the way he is administering his department.

We hope to increase the population of this country many times. We have advocated in this Chamber on many occasions, not only from this side but from the Government benches, that if we are going to maintain our safety we have to do something very quickly about our population. What about that policy? If we are going to talk about increasing our population two or threefold, which we hope to do for security reasons, what about the people not yet in Australia and those as yet unborn who will want to possess a piece of land in this State? How does the Government reconcile its policy of giving the land away with that? Don't we have a responsibility to those people whom we hope to attract to this country and others who are yet unborn but who will one day be members of this community?

There are many new techniques in industry. In our lifetime we have seen techniques change tremendously and quickly. Look how the aviation industry has changed over the

last 20 years! And there are many others that, if I stopped and thought for a while, I could mention here tonight. If it is possible by new techniques to change the face of industry why would it not be possible by new techniques to change the face of our land in this great country within a generation or so? The Minister has said that he is in favour of freehold tenure and that he intends to give the land away. He mentioned that he was prepared to grant freehold tenure over some but not all of the land. I suppose that at least 40 per cent. of the land will eventually be taken away from the State. The Minister has referred to certain land which, perhaps, is not very desirable, but why could not that land, by new techniques, be suddenly turned into very desirable land? I think that is a fair argument. I do not think the Minister could argue against it. If we give people these great tracts of land which the Minister suggests are not very desirable, what will happen if, in 10 or 20 years,—which is not very long—the whole face of that country suddenly became changed? Could not the Government be caught in its own trap with this land? That is another argument why we should be very careful with the land of this State. It is not ours. After all, it is not yours, Mr. Gaven, or mine. If we liked to use that argument we could say that it belonged to your grandfather and my grandfather. But we are only here for a little while so what right have we got to take it and say, "This is mine." I do not think we have that right. We are here for only a fleeting time, and we are here to pass it on to somebody else later on. If we are so slow in our own thinking, it is a poor outlook for the generations ahead.

Mr. Murray interjected.

Mr. TUCKER: The hon. member for Clayfield has been continually interjecting. I will come to him in a minute when, after what I have to say, he may not be as ready to interject.

I believe that we hold the land on trust. We do not have the right to say what we are going to do with it. We do not have the right to throw it away because we only hold it in trust for a short time for those who come after us.

The Leader of the Opposition reminds me of the new techniques used in the 90-Mile Desert in South Australia. The whole face of that country was changed by the addition of trace elements.

In a similar way what we now consider as undesirable land could be changed very quickly indeed into desirable land.

Mr. Hiley: That is not a happy illustration, because that was done by the A.M.P. Society and I.C.I.

Mr. TUCKER: I do not care who did it. I am talking about the land itself and the techniques. I do not care whether the

A.M.P. or anybody else found it out. The point is that it has been found out and can be applied.

This morning the Minister replied to a question I asked about land in the suburb of Pallarenda in my electorate. At a rough guess there are about 20 acres in that suburb which are presently being exploited by the Government. It is Crown land. Eventually approximately 108 allotments will be available. This was a matter to which I drew the Minister's attention on a number of occasions. The department acted very swiftly when I suggested to the Treasurer that he take over this land for Queensland Housing Commission purposes. Eventually the Department of Lands stated it would be put onto the market. The development of this land started about a year ago and I venture to say that if anyone else was subdividing it and took as long to do so he would be virtually bankrupt by now. This morning I asked the Minister what was delaying its development and he replied that the contractors were mainly responsible. This evening I want to know why the contractors are allowed to hold up its development.

I looked at this land occasionally because I thought it would eventually reach the people of Townsville as cheap land, but I am beginning to wonder what is behind the long delay. It is a reasonably flat, sandy block suitable for exploitation and, in my opinion, should have been easily developed, but it is dragging on. The Minister said that the Council and other people also have a finger in the pie and that it will not be ready before March, 1964. It contains only 108 allotments and a comparatively small amount of work is required to develop it compared with subdivisions in Townsville and other places. I wonder why the department has been so lax with its exploitation, and why it has not given the contractor a prod to get him moving and get it onto the market. One must begin to wonder whether there is something sinister in the delay. Why has it been held up so long? Is someone saying, "Hold it up for another year.?" I do not know, but I should say that you, Mr. Gaven, or I, or anyone else would have said that it is not good to hold up its development so long and that the contractor must get moving. It is impossible to understand why it has taken so long to develop and why it will not be on the market before March, 1964, particularly when there are only 108 allotments, and it is just an ordinary piece of land. I thought the object was to get cheap land for the people in Townsville.

The Minister referred to the King Ranch Development Coy. Pty. Ltd. I am not opposed, nor is my party, to foreign capital coming into the country, but we want to control it when it comes here; we do not wish to be controlled by it. That is how all A.L.P. members view it. This American company is controlled by Sir Rupert Clarke.

I am not worried because it is an American company, but I repeat that we want to control foreign capital and not be controlled by it. The Minister said that 51,000 acres are to be allocated to this company and that I did not know where the land was. He is right off the beam there because I have tramped from one end of it to the other. When the previous Federal member for Herbert, who is now the hon. member for Clayfield, advocated that some of this land should be opened, a number of us went there to see what he was talking about and to make ourselves au fait with the area. He said that I went there and was misled by the boy scouts. I should say that he went there and was misled by the brownies; he probably went up there to boil water for them. In my opinion, no-one could be more misled than the Minister about this land. When I heard him putting his case across this afternoon, and playing down this land as he did, I nearly wept for this company. He said they were fighting courageously and attacking the tremendous problems and to develop it will spend £1,486,000. No-one can convince me that any company would spend £1,486,000 without hoping for a return. Does the Minister think we are so silly, or does he think that, by playing it down we will swallow the story? I know this country, and the hon. member for Mourilyan knows it, too. Quite a number of us on this side know it and the hon. member for Clayfield knows it. The other day by way of interjection he said it was some of the most desirable and most fertile land in Queensland. If that is not true, perhaps he will tell us something about it tonight.

The Minister said there were 7,000 acres of swamp, 26,000 acres of forest, and 18,000 acres of scrub. I will grant him the 7,000 acres of swamp—and I believe they can do something with that swamp, too—but the forest country is very good country, and the 18,000 acres of scrub is very desirable land indeed.

The previous Minister for Lands said—

“The Minister that puts his signature to a document opening up that land should be gaoled.”

He further said—

“I said, ‘Yes, for being a traitor to the generations to come.’ I was not prepared to give a statement to the Press as strong as that, but I said that it would be a criminal action.”

He was talking about that particular land and he himself said it was so desirable that at that stage it would be criminal to give it away. I wonder what this Minister says. He says that is just next door. I know all about “next door”. We know that Mullins and many other people up there have got onto this land, felled it and cleared it and today they are fattening cattle on some of the most wonderful country in this State.

So the Minister can have the 26,000 acres and the 7,000 acres but he can give me the 18,000 acres. And he gave King Ranch the 18,000 acres for a nominal sum, and that is the vital land of the 51,000 acres. He says that eventually they will get freehold tenure for it. The moment that happens, whatever he says, they will be able to do what they like with it. The moment it becomes freehold, as the hon. member for Mourilyan has said, the 18,000 acres alone—forgetting all the rest of it—will be worth a fortune. Every one of us knows that is true. They have been handed a bonanza by the Government in that 18,000 acres if nothing else. They can leave the rest alone. I doubt whether they will. They might exploit it. But the 18,000 acres is the key to the land and they have got it for a nominal sum. It does not matter whether they pay £1 an acre or £5 an acre. Eventually, when it is freehold, wouldn't you or I buy that land, if eventually we were going to get £50 or £100 an acre for it? The Minister says it will take £30 or £40 an acre to exploit it—it may—but there would be a big return after that.

So I stand with the hon. member for Mourilyan and say that something smells about this grant to King Ranch and I declare tonight that there should be a royal commission into the whole of the ramifications of the transaction. There is no way in the world anybody can convince me that these people have not really got a wonderful thing from the Crown. They have been granted something outstanding. They have been given something that they can turn into a tremendous fortune, and nobody can tell me that Sir Rupert Clarke would not be ready to do that and that he would not say in fact that it could be done.

The Minister says nobody else approached him. I should like to know what the hon. member for Clayfield did some years ago. I was not on his side, but I was on the sidelines watching and I can remember his frustration when he was endeavouring to get something done up there with cattle-fattening and to get something from the Crown in regard to this land. He was not in the race. If he rises to speak tonight and is fair and truthful, he will say that. Yet these foreign people can come into the country and get this land from the Minister at a nominal sum and say, “We are going to do this and that.” And the Crown, gullible as it is, apparently, and as the Minister for Lands is—

Mr. Ramsden: You are talking a lot of poppycock.

Mr. TUCKER: Judging from the interjections and the worried looks of hon. members opposite, they realise we are on to something. Everyone in Queensland who watched this deal felt that something was wrong with it.

Mr. Ewan: You said that the Labour Government gave me £2,000,000.

Mr. TUCKER: I did not say the Labour Government gave the hon. member £2,000,000. I said that he did all right under the Labour Government to the extent that today he is almost a millionaire twice over, with interests on the Gold Coast as well. Although he was known as the prickly pear grazier before, he did all right under Labour administration.

The Minister claimed that this land can be compared with the wallum country. By no stretch of the imagination is that so. One is in a low-rainfall area and the other in a high-rainfall area. That in itself makes a big difference. One can have poor land in a high-rainfall area and do fairly well out of it, but none of this land is comparable with the wallum country as I know it round Maryborough. As the hon. member for Mourilyan said, the Committee of Inquiry into the sugar industry found that some of this land could be put under sugar-cane. We all know that one would be flat out doing that with the wallum country.

I believe that this land has been handed to King Ranch by the Government. I am not here to say that the Government did not have full knowledge of this. The Minister is in charge of the department and therefore should know. If he did not know, why did he not send his officers out to find out? He gave a lot of figures of comparable costs. I do not believe any of them. I, and many others who have been on this land, know that at least part of it is very desirable land and should not have been opened this way.

(Time expired.)

Hon. A. R. FLETCHER (Cunningham—Minister for Lands) (7.47 p.m.): I am sure that we have all been vastly entertained by the hon. member for Townsville North, who has just resumed his seat. He put forward some odd theories about what is happening in North Queensland round Tully and rambled round Pallarenda, where he was just as lost as he apparently was in the Tully area. I imagine that if the hon. member travelled round the Tully area it took him days and days and a large search party was needed to find him. In spite of all that, he knew nothing about it when he came back. Possibly his anxiety at getting lost stopped him from observing the country that he passed through.

With regard to Pallarenda, he used the word "exploit" several times. I do not know what he was talking about. This is a normal proposition and is proceeding with the usual difficulties associated with this sort of job. Quite often there is a delay of a month or two, and there is nothing sinister about that. It is quite the normal thing. I suggest that he go and see the city council up there if he is worried, because they are the ones most keenly interested.

The hon. member fulminated about the previous Minister for Lands and what he said about Tully and other areas. I think he

said something to the effect that Mr. Muller, when he was Minister for Lands, spoke of the inadvisability of using some of the Tully land for settlement. I can remember an occasion on which he was speaking on behalf of the Department of Forestry when he said that he considered that it was not a good thing to alienate the land from that department because he thought it was better in their hands than under the plough or being used for grazing techniques. I am not saying that I disagree with him in respect of certain areas. He certainly was not speaking about this area. He was speaking about a much superior area, some of which we have since opened for settlement and which is different altogether from the area about which we are now speaking.

He also said that the hon. member for Fassifern had said something scathing—I presume it was about additional areas—about somebody who had progressed from a horse paddock to a sheep station. I thought at the time that that was really a scathing indictment of Labour's regime, when additional areas were scandalously handed out to people for very little reason. I think I could even pick out instances under Labour's regime of men with 500 acres, or something of that sort, going from there to 5,000 acres, and in one case to 20,000 acres. However, that has nothing to with the question before the Committee at the moment.

The hon. member for Townsville North, and other hon. members, are wont to get up and, with crocodile tears almost streaming down their faces—they never quite get there—talk about birthrights and unborn generations.

Mr. Tucker: What is wrong with that?

Mr. FLETCHER: Nothing, except that it is not honest and sincere. I am telling the Committee that I am carrying out my responsibility to future generations.

Mr. Tucker interjected.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Townsville North had an opportunity to state his case. The Minister listened to it, and I ask the hon. member to listen to the Minister's reply.

Mr. FLETCHER: Thank you, Mr. Gaven. As I said, I consider that the carrying out of my responsibility to unborn generations includes the sort of thing that we are doing in the Tully area—that is, finding out whether a hitherto fairly useless piece of land can be used. If this had not been done under my administration and there had still been a Labour Minister in office, the land would still be there in 25 years and no-one would know whether or not it could be used.

Mr. Tucker: That is not true.

Mr. FLETCHER: It is true. Why has it been there for so many years without

anybody on it? We will get somebody to try it and learn from them the profitable and unprofitable ways of using it. From that point we can proceed to carry out the Government's responsibility to unborn generations. Up till now there has been only a neglect of that responsibility. Under Labour Governments, the land could well have been lying idle till the year 2000 and no-one would have known whether or not it could be used. It could not be opened up in individual areas; it would be too risky. We tried it in better areas than this and found that it was risky. In fact, one of the men who drew a particularly choice block could not get anybody to back him.

Mr. Tucker: Why did you put a requirement of £20,000 on the brigalow lands for the little men?

Mr. FLETCHER: What a fatuous statement! I do not mind a relevant interjection, or even one that has some germ of relevancy or intelligence, but there is no way in which we can let people onto 10,000 or 6,000 acres of brigalow with no money. One might as well try to ride on a tram without paying a fare. One has to have money.

Mr. Tucker: You are all for the big fellow.

Mr. FLETCHER: That has nothing to do with the question under discussion. It is just rubbish. I am not ashamed to place on record what I am prepared to do for the little man, as well as what I am prepared to do for the big man. Hon. members opposite talk about birthrights and unborn generations. They have shown an absolute disregard for areas of Queensland that might have supported unborn generations if some incentive had been offered in the way of security of tenure, improved developmental techniques, or freeholding, which has a great deal to commend it.

Mr. Tucker: Under freehold it will eventually be all back in one big block again.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is all rubbish and has nothing to do with the present matter.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Townsville North to contain himself and allow the Minister to make his reply without interruption.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member generally floundered about. After having floundered about geographically and not knowing where he was, he floundered about among his own ideas and arguments. He expected us to take seriously the suggestion that, while the A.M.P. show down south was a good idea—something that is almost on the same line of thinking, something that is designed to prove an area that hitherto has been a very poor sort of risk to individuals—this was not a good idea. He could not have brought up anything that was

a more shining example of the value of the principle we are trying to apply. That is the very thing we are trying to do—what they did down there with an area that was not much good. We had not the money ourselves to experiment with it, so let us get somebody who will take the risk on the chance of getting a profit—and good luck to them if they do—by learning for themselves those things that we cannot learn. That is precisely what we are doing.

Mr. Byrne: You could have learned that by experimenting with a pilot block.

Mr. FLETCHER: This is a pilot block. You need a good sized block and you have to persuade somebody on the basis that he has a big area and a good chance of success, and on the basis that he can take the reward if he makes it a success. That is the way you get the organisations in, but if you are cheese-paring you won't get them, as we did not get the previous two.

The hon. member for Mourilyan wanted to know who had made some attempt to negotiate with us before these people. They were Vestey's and Hookers, and they did not get to the stage of negotiating a pound-per-acre deal. They did not get to the stage of being interested. They had a look at it and said, "You are trying to sell us something that is not worth looking at." That, in effect, is what they said—"We could not possibly do anything with that; we want something better."

Mr. Byrne: Who represented Hookers?

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not know who represented Hookers. I am not here to give personal names and addresses. If the hon. member comes to my office I will give him personal names and addresses, but I can assure him that that is the basis on which they left it. They did not think the area was good enough.

The hon. member for Mourilyan says, pathetically almost, on behalf of the people of Queensland, "Why don't you give our own people a go?" That is precisely what we tried to do. We tried to give our own men a go on individual blocks. However, we found the risk, on even better blocks than these, such that there is no way in the world that this Government would risk sending a man there with everything to lose and an almost 100 per cent. certainty of losing it. In the present state of knowledge of the way it can be developed we tried to see whether we could give our own men a go. The technicians opposite demonstrated while they were in office that they could never give our own men a go on this type of country. If we get the answers we are hoping to get, then we will get some more of this land on which to give our own men a go. But if this fails perhaps we will be back where we started. But don't blame us for trying. We think this is a good thing

to do. It is a Cabinet decision. Don't give me all the credit for it. This was a decision of the Government.

Mr. Walsh: You "copped" all the abuse, anyhow.

Mr. FLETCHER: The Government worked this out and this is the cumulative effect of their good sense and their good judgment. I am taking my due amount of credit. I take pride in what I did, but I do not want to take the lot.

The hon. member for Mourilyan said, "Will you do it again somewhere else?"—presumably in more valuable areas. I covered that point in my opening speech. This was a test area. We are only doing this on a problem area where we have no possibility of putting in individuals until we find out the answers.

Mr. Byrne interjected.

Mr. FLETCHER: I said quite a lot about it and I will say it again. There is no way in the world we will do this in other than a problem area.

Mr. Walsh: I think you are stonewalling.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am not stonewalling at all.

Hon. members opposite say we want more and more producers. So do we. The only way we will get more producers is to find out how to do it. We will never do it by saying, "We will not give a big man a go at it in case he makes a success of it." The hon. member talks about giving the area away at a nominal sum. Is he suggesting that the Land Court decisions on which these values were determined are phoney? Are they inspired? Are they wrong? What sort of a reflection is this on Land Court decisions? These are not my valuations. They are valuations calculated on the evidence of experts in the Land Court.

There is no way hon. members opposite can persuade any intelligent men in the Chamber that these are valuations that Cabinet decided on. They are based on Land Court decisions. Is he saying that the Land Court is so wrong? If he suggests that the land is worth £100 an acre, how can he square that with the rent payable on the land we have opened that is a lot better than this land? I think it is about 9d. an acre. Capitalise that back from £100 per acre. We would have to be charging those people probably £4 an acre. If we followed Sir William Payne's technique of applying 4 per cent. of the unimproved value as the yearly rental, on the suggestion of the hon. member for Mourilyan we would be charging these people at Tully £4 an acre. How silly can he be! We are not giving the land away. We are selling it at twice the value of comparable land—values that were decided by a duly constituted Land Court.

I think the hon. member wanted the name of a lessee on P.L.S. 2404 at Innisfail. For his information the names are Michael Joseph Dore and Veronica Agnes Dore. That was a property that was roughly comparable.

Mr. Byrne: Who was the purchaser?

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not carry a file on these things around with me, but if the information is important to the hon. member I will get it for him. What is more important to me is the amount of money that passes between the buyer and the seller.

Hon. members opposite were very keen to take some of the comments of the hon. member for Gregory as a scathing indictment of Government policy.

Mr. Duggan: He said that himself.

Mr. FLETCHER: Not of Government policy, but his impression of what the Department of Lands has done. I am never greatly worried about what the hon. member for Gregory says because he says it to my face. He says it in all honesty on the basis of his genuine worries. When we get together and I tell him the facts of life I think that his worries will be completely allayed. He is entitled to express his concern if people up there have given him a set of background information that could give him cause for worry.

Land ballots present a great deal of worry to us. In some instances a lot of dissatisfaction is expressed by individuals because we cannot easily set down a rule of thumb by which we can let qualified men in and exclude unqualified men, without there being borderline cases or cases with special circumstances attaching to them. We have tried to get over that by setting up this three-man committee of review in the hope that at least we will make it a bit more elastic and get down to something practical and realistic. We hope that it will be as elastic as possible because human values are very difficult to assess.

The hon. member suggested that to deal with the applicants the panel should be in the area in which the block is situated. That might help sometimes, but in the recent Minnie Downs ballot there were 850 or 870 applicants, a good many of whom came from the area, but even on that occasion I do not think the proportion was sufficiently large to warrant taking the committee out there. In fact, the applicants came from all over Queensland and I do not think it is practical to take the three-man committee all over Queensland because they would be travelling for a month. The applicants who qualify come to see the committee and, having satisfied the committee, they do not have to appear again. It is not unreasonable to expect them to come once as the blocks are pretty valuable and should be worth a lot of trouble and expense to any young man who has his

application approved. He should be happy to be approved; of course, there are others who are not approved who will not be so happy, but we cannot do very much about that.

Mr. Duggan: Did the hon. member complain about the method of the ballot he won?

Mr. FLETCHER: Not about the method; he wants to streamline it, to make it easier. No doubt it is a bit of a hardship for a man who is an overseer out at Thargomindah to get leave to come down here. It occasions loss of time and a lot of expense, but in the long run it may be worth it.

Mr. McKechnie: Having been accepted once, is he right for all time?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes, unless he goes broke, or breaks a leg, or something like that. Obviously, once he appears, his next application is accepted.

Mr. Duggan: What about dealing with with some of the serious charges the hon. member referred to?

Mr. Sherrington: Trafficking in land, and so on.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am coming to that.

The hon. member referred to Bowen Downs and the Scottish Australian Company, which had its 100-year anniversary the other day. I went out to see them because I thought it was a special occasion and that my visit might be of mutual benefit—and it was. Over their 100 years of occupancy they have lost three-quarters of their area. I have no doubt in the world that if I am still here they will lose more of their area if it is suitable for closer settlement, and I made no bones about that when I was out there because it does not pay to be otherwise than completely honest. As I say, they have lost three-quarters of their area and in the long run I have no doubt that they will lose a substantial portion of the remainder.

The hon. member was worried by the stud lease of the Falkiner interests at Boonoke, Coolagh and Springleigh. They have three living areas under the terms of their stud lease. Coolagh, the property to the north, is 35 miles from Springleigh. It is not one consolidated area. The Boonoke stud holding is in two segments; the 34 miles separating the southern area from the northern area are a nuisance. There is no doubt about that. That is the land they hold and that is what we now regard as constituting the stud lease.

An Opposition Member: Which is the one they have the bullocks on?

Mr. FLETCHER: I have not been out there. They could be on both. On any sheep property, if there has been a good season and there is plenty of grass, the obvious and sensible thing to do is to get bullocks

onto it. The hon. member for Roma will confirm that statement. It is not something that should not be done; it is something that should be done. Those who have any knowledge of the way sheep country is worked know full well that, if you have a good growth of grass, it does not hurt the sheep to graze cattle as well.

Mr. Walsh: Surely a stud lease for sheep would not provide for bullocks?

Mr. FLETCHER: How does the hon. member for Bundaberg know? How does he know there are 1,000 cattle there?

Mr. Walsh: I did not say there were. The hon. member for Gregory said it.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member is taking his word. And he did not say so. He said it had been reported.

Mr. Sherrington: Do you say he is telling an untruth?

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not say that. I say he said it had been reported. There is no statutory declaration to the effect that there are 1,000. If there are 1,000 cattle there, they are being carried in addition to the number of sheep required under the conditions, because this year they have assured us that they have sold the number of rams they are required to sell, and a good many more.

Mr. Davies: Did they make a statutory declaration on that?

Mr. FLETCHER: We will get yearly returns. We do not get it till the end of the year. Meanwhile, we haven't any doubt, because they do not give their word and go back on it. They are trustworthy and we can take their word as though it were a bond. I am quite satisfied, when they say they have exceeded the number they were required to sell, they have exceeded that number. I will continue to believe that until it is proved otherwise. If they have done that and if they are running stock, we will have a look at it; but if they have carried out the conditions, who is to say they should not run stock as well?

Mr. Sherrington: The hon. member for Gregory said it.

Mr. FLETCHER: He did not say that.

Mr. Sherrington: He implied it.

Mr. FLETCHER: The inference is what the hon. member draws. I take what I think is a good thing to take.

Mr. Sherrington: In other words, you do not believe the hon. member for Gregory?

Mr. FLETCHER: I believe him implicitly. He says it is reported. I have no doubt that it has been reported. We will probably find out if it is true.

These two holdings 34 miles apart constitute the stud at the moment; but, adjoining

the southern portion—that is, Springleigh—is Mrs. A. E. Hall's grazing homestead, No. 5833 of Blackall, and the proposal now before the department is that the company sell the northern part (Coolagh, the smaller area 34 miles away, and a dashed nuisance, I have no doubt) and purchase Mrs. Hall's selection for inclusion in the southern part for the purpose, of course, of consolidating the area and making it an easier and a more practical and a better way of running a stud. That is common horse sense. What in effect they came and asked us to do was to agree that they sell this detached portion and buy the one next door. When I heard of it I said, "That is an eminently common-sense sort of thing to do." Surely we are here to help the industry. Stud leases are considered and conceded to be a necessary part of the sheep industry and these people have a high reputation all over the sheep industry areas of Queensland.

Mr. Duggan: What you are implying, if you are not saying it directly, is that you are talking horse sense and the hon. member for Gregory was talking nonsense.

Mr. FLETCHER: I could perhaps be saying that the hon. member for Gregory does not know as much about it as I do. That does not mean to say he is not entitled to be as worried as he is because somebody has told him the things that worry him. I am telling the Committee and the hon. member for Gregory what the position is for my part, and I agreed to that proposition because I thought it was a jolly good idea.

Mr. Melloy: What was the difference in area between what was bought and what was sold?

Mr. FLETCHER: 100 acres.

Mr. Melloy: The same!

Mr. FLETCHER: We do not talk in acres. The area that will be bought is a better area than the area that is going to be sold. You cannot hope to get all these areas exactly comparable. It is still a good proposition. I think it will be something under 2,000 sheep better than it was before. Even though the 100 acres is all the difference in acreage, it is still a much better block. It will be a better stud. And if these people carry on as they have done in the last—how many years?

Mr. Ewan: 100 years!

Mr. FLETCHER: Probably 100 years, it will be an asset to the sheep industry of Queensland. I am not the least bit ashamed of having done this, because I think it was the practical thing to do.

Mr. Hanlon: Would others in the same position, say 30 or 40 miles apart, get the same consideration?

Mr. FLETCHER: Of course, if they were similar situations.

I hope that I am consistent in my practical attitude to these things. There is nothing snide about it. A living area that is detached is to be sold. If it is something like 1,800 sheep or even 100 acres less than the one to be acquired, that is the sort of give-and-take proposition one finds in the West and does not affect the common-sense nature of the whole proposition.

Mr. Duggan: We are pleased with your explanation. We were rather disturbed before. You seem to have cleared it up.

Mr. FLETCHER: I think that that pretty well covers the points raised. I concede that the hon. member for Gregory has a perfect right to be worried about this sort of thing and I sympathise with his attitude towards individual areas and aggregations. I am completely in his corner, and if he was worried by what may have sounded to be something damaging from me, I am only too delighted to clear it up.

I have nothing to apologise for. This merely consolidates an area for the benefit of one of our most reputable studs. Admittedly they receive 100 additional acres of land and 1,700 or 1,800 more sheep. Admittedly, too, the area will be easier to manage and better for the production of rams, which will not harm the State. I am on the side of the fellow who wants to do a better job, and am prepared to help him with any little adjustments that can be made without any contravention of the land laws of the State.

There was nothing much that I could have done to stop it. The man who went and bought the lease from Mrs. Hall was acting quite within his rights as an individual. He did that as an individual on the understanding that it will be added to the stud lease later. There was nothing to stop him in law from becoming the owner of Mrs. Hall's property, and there was nothing to stop Mrs. Hall from withdrawing from the sale by auction if she received an offer that she considered satisfactory. That happens every day. People advertise properties or land for sale by auction, receive satisfactory offers before the auctions are held, and, to save people going to the auctions, they then advertise that the auctions are not now to be held as the deals have been completed.

I think that that is as clear an elucidation as I can give of what has gone on. Nothing is wrong and everyone is a little better off.

Mr. Duggan: You said that you did not mind the hon. member for Gregory saying these things because he always tells you beforehand.

Mr. FLETCHER: I did not say that at all.

Mr. Duggan: You said that whatever he has to say he always says to your face. Did he tell you these things before?

Mr. FLETCHER: No. I think that that clears up a couple of things about which there were some misgivings.

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (8.19 p.m.): I should like first to congratulate the Minister on the presentation of his Estimates. The administration of the Department of Lands in Queensland is a very complex challenge to any man. We have within the State variations in temperature, rainfall, and soil, and administering the lands of the State is a complex and challenging job. The man in charge needs the wisdom of Solomon and his own forbearance. I think it is a most awkward task requiring the highest of integrity. I am certain that the Minister is such a man. As I said, the problems confronting him are complex and require infinite patience and judgment in their consideration. The Minister has to weigh all the evidence, and he is capable of doing that.

He is a man to whom one can talk straight, and his relationship with the hon. member for Gregory illustrates that. I do not always agree with the Minister, either, and I shall raise some matters later on which I do not agree with him. However, I look forward to discussing problems with him and he is big enough to deal with the matters that I raise on that basis. We are not yes-men who are behind him all the time. We ask leave to disagree with him at times, and we hope that by not being submissive, servile yes-men we can assist him to improve the land laws of Queensland.

I wish to deal first with a matter that has been raised to only a limited extent in the debate so far. It is the job that the department is doing in eradicating and controlling *Harrisia cactus*. I have not the figures before me, but I know that about 164,000 acres in the Collinsville area have been pulled and the cactus at least curbed if not brought completely under control. A good job is being done there, and I compliment the Minister and the department on the virile way in which the problem has been attacked and the success that has been achieved.

Mr. Tucker: It was done under the hon. member for Fassifern's administration.

Mr. McKECHNIE: It is being continued, and I do not wish to take credit from anybody. *Harrisia cactus* has spread over a much greater portion of the State than most people realise, and there is a light infestation on much of the Darling Downs and in parts of the near Maranoa. It has not yet reached pest proportions, and the Co-ordinating Board, acting for the department, is keeping it fairly well under control on the stock routes. It is a sneaky plant that comes up in out-of-the-way places, and it can get out of control quite easily on private properties. We must keep a close watch on it in these areas because it could become a very expensive problem if inspections were neglected over a long period. There are

two types of *Harrisia cactus*, *Martinii* and *Tortuosa*. They are both slow growers and there is very little difference between them. In fact, they can be recognised by their similarity.

Four or five years ago I was not very happy about the Co-ordinating Board's handling of the construction of the dingo barrier fence. I am speaking only of the area that I know, not of the whole of Queensland. The people in the northern part of the Waggamba shire, an area which I represent, were rather dubious about the fence, perhaps even hostile to it, but they have now come to appreciate it. It has not cost a lot of money and has been successful in restricting the dog menace in the area. The Co-ordinating Board honoured its promise to employ a dogger in the forestry areas in the district and he caught 14 dogs in the last few months. Unfortunately, he left the board's employ and the position is now vacant. I hope the Co-ordinating Board continues to employ doggers and do a good job in those areas.

Coming to the brigalow lands, I have had considerable experience and I feel competent to talk about them. I have been on my present block for 30 years, or have been associated with that area for 30 years, most of the time on that block. When I went onto it 30 years ago, admittedly things were rather different from what they are now, but in those days you could have a large area. In fact, most of these areas were allotted in double living areas and you could blunder along without money and eventually after some 20 years, make a success and retain half your block. Under those conditions it worked out all right.

But these days, we have not so much land. We have to act more quickly and we cannot afford to give one man two living areas to overcome his shortage of capital. The brigalow lands in the central region of Queensland have been criticised for the amount of money required to develop them. I have not seen this land and I do not want to talk too much about it but similar conditions apply to brigalow country in the South. Speaking of this land, it would require at least £40,000 to put the blocks into production quickly and the ballotee must have £12,000. He needs every penny of it. I regret that he does need it, but he must have it.

Mr. Sherrington: He needs about £70,000.

Mr. McKECHNIE: He does. He needs about £24,000 of Government loan and that is why, on this brigalow land in Central Queensland, the balloting has to be more severe. The Government not only conducts the ballot but is the banker, and it is necessary for the applicant to be a worth-while citizen, reputable, capable and experienced. Consequently, it is necessary that the men going into these brigalow areas in Central Queensland have a lot of money.

In other blocks in the southern brigalow belt where former lessees have developed the land, so much money is not required, and here I hope to see these ballots a little more open. I discussed the matter with the Minister a few months ago and he has met my problem most of the way with this committee of review. Most of the men who are entitled to get onto these blocks are now successfully achieving their aim through this committee. There are one or two small anomalies I should like to have rectified, but they are only minor matters compared with the problems that were there six months ago when a man required three years' experience in the last seven or 10 years—I have just forgotten which at the moment. To date this committee has acted sensibly. I have appeared before it in person to represent different people and I have found the members most co-operative. People who have gone before the committee of their own accord have come back to our area completely satisfied.

Mr. Davies: Do you agree that some are given unfair advantages, as stated by the hon. member for Gregory?

Mr. McKECHNIE: I think that this committee is fair and just.

Mr. Davies: Do you think they give unfair advantage?

Mr. McKECHNIE: I am dealing with this particular committee and I reiterate that I consider is fair and just.

Reverting to the complex problems of the Department of Lands, to show how complex they are in Queensland, I might say that in my own electorate, which is a very small part of Queensland, one goes from the apple orchards in the east, through granite and traprock country, scrub country and open plains, and within this distance of 200 miles most of the land problems of the State exist. That is just a sample of Queensland and I suppose I am fortunate to represent such an electorate because it gives me an opportunity of studying at first hand many of the complex problems that must be repeated on a much larger scale throughout Queensland.

Mr. Davies: You would be in a position to judge King Ranch.

Mr. McKECHNIE: I have not been up in the area of King Ranch. I endeavour to speak on subjects I know. When I do not know a subject I admit it. I endeavour not to make a guess. I want to see King Ranch. I want to see the brigalow country and many other things. When I have seen these things I shall then endeavour to speak about them with some authority. It will be up to the hon. member to judge then.

Coming back to the area I do know, I must here partly disagree with the Minister in what he said regarding a living area. I prefer to think of it as an economic unit. In the future that lies ahead of us we are going to face intense competition. Rather

than think of how small a block a man can live on, it is better to think of what is the economic unit on which various products can be produced at a reasonable price. I know that the bigger you grow the cheaper things can become, but I am not in favour of going above a certain limit. There has to be a balance between the price of things and the desirability of getting people on the land. It is desirable that you have an economic unit that is capable of producing the right number of sheep that can be run in the right-sized flocks to produce the correct lines of wool for sale in open competition. They must be flocks of 1,000 each because your flock is divided into at least four separate flocks so that you need in the vicinity of 4,000 sheep to have an economic unit. Some areas would only carry 3,500 sheep, perhaps only 3,000. In that instance it can be brought up to an economic unit by development of the land with grazing lucerne, pasture improvement, or whatever it may be. I do not disagree to a large extent with the Minister here, but I disagree on some points. I hope to influence him in time in these matters, although there is not a great variation between us. It stresses again the fact that in this Government we are prepared to talk things over and try to reach a composite policy. At the same time, if you do not get too small where you become a peasant community, or become too big where you have almost a landlord set-up, but big enough to be an economic unit, you can have decent facilities to run your sheep and good working conditions for your employees. Generally speaking, you can develop a property in a worth-while manner so that it is something you can be proud of.

The hon. member for Townsville North said that with freehold tenure you lose the interest in the land, that you cannot pass it on to future generations yet unborn. I think the opposite way. I believe that you must own the land to develop it. You must own it in trust for future generations. If you have only the transient use of it you are only a wrecker of land; you spoil it; you over-use it and exploit it. If you own the land and hold it in trust for future generations as yet unborn, in the true sense of the word "trust"—in a trustful way—you will look after it and pass it on in better condition than it was when it came into your hands. As an illustration I point out that you have the same problem with houses. If a man is the owner of a house he looks after it, but if he rents it, sometimes he does, sometimes he does not.

Another problem mentioned by the hon. member for Gregory concerned additional areas for sub-standard leases. Under the 1952 Land Act, without a shadow of doubt, many blocks were opened up which were too small. At the time, the Government was tempted to open up these small blocks because the price of wool was three times its price today. In 1951 wool was selling

at roughly £1 a pound against 5s. 6d. a pound today, and there was a temptation in those days to open up small blocks because, under the prevailing conditions, it was possible to run small blocks. Today we are left with the legacy of these sub-standard blocks. Wherever there is a surrendered or expired holding first preference should be given to the men struggling under adverse conditions on blocks that are too small. I do not suggest that they should necessarily be hard-adjacent to the sub-standard blocks. It is undoubtedly desirable to help men when they have been struggling for years and, equally so, they should have extra land within reasonable distance wherever practicable to afford them a reasonable standard of living. At the same time, there are other reserves of land that could be used. There are quite a few large reserves that, in years gone by, were necessary for depasturing large numbers of cattle overnight because stock, particularly cattle were drove in large numbers. In many cases these reserves have become redundant and could be leased to the selectors of sub-standard holdings. Better still, a-half, or even three-quarters of the reserves could be excised and added to the selector's block. He would then have an equity in the land and could borrow on it, whereas a special lease would not help him to borrow and, as we know, the men on new blocks need all the finance they can lay their hands on.

In many areas there are wide stock routes. Their size could be cut down. I do not suggest that we should make them too small because we do not want them to be made too narrow. We know that what may be a track today, may be a four-lane highway tomorrow. In some places we could with safety cut down on the area of stock routes, particularly when they are half a mile wide and used only on a few occasions in the year. In most instances someone is using them, but not for the benefit of the State. The State might as well have the benefit, and the lessee the security of the areas. It is not always the man who has the best moral right to them who is making use of them.

Freeholding is the only way to give secure tenure. There is great complexity in land tenure in this State. In the days when the State had to be developed it was obviously to our advantage to have large companies go out and open up large tracts. Not many people wanted the country and that is still the position in some areas, but, in the near-distant areas there is a need for properties of a reasonable size with fair security, and freeholding is the answer provided the area is not too small and not too big. If areas were too big, the problem could be overcome by the impact of land tax. With one and a-half living areas or with economic units, the holder can afford to carry much heavier land tax per acre. We cannot divide one and a-half living areas yet the holders can afford to pay more money because they are on a higher living plane with their

larger holdings. If an area was so big that you held two living areas, the land tax could be so extortionate as to encourage the subdivision of it. When you get to very big areas of much more than two or three living areas, it could be very severe indeed.

We have in this day not far away a few parcels of freehold that have come about through the aggregation of blocks that were too small in the first place. Two hundred miles west of here in the first quarter of the century an area was opened up into 640-acre dairy farms. I do not know which Government was in office and I am not concerned. It could be either side. Those farms succeeded for a while and then failed, and today the areas have been aggregated into 10,000 acres and possibly 30,000 acres of freehold. They could be controlled in this way. Those areas worry me because they are close to progressive towns, and they would retard any town. It is desirable that they be broken up. It does not happen very often, but it happens, and it is desirable that they be reduced to moderate size. That would then build the towns by creating a greater density of population and, in the nearer inland areas, will make it easier to provide the facilities enjoyed by those on the coast. We want to extend the various ancillary services, such as electricity, but with parcels of a big area it is too dear to do so. With reasonable, economic units brought about in the way I suggest, the districts would progress.

Mr. Davies: It would be very dear to bring about. How would you break them up?

Mr. McKECHNIE: With land tax. I went to great pains to explain that if this tax was worked in the correct way—and it was the original intention of land tax—it would be the answer at all times to the cry that freehold can strangle the country.

My time has almost finished, but I want to touch on the rabbit problem, which could get out of hand in the near future. While we think myxomatosis has it under control, the experts assure us that we are living in a fool's paradise. In the area I represent we have not been rated to control rabbits, but we will be, and, instead of trying to keep them out, we have built fences that will a barrier fencing us in with the rabbits. An attempt is being made to squash the problem at its source and I commend the Minister on having the inquiry made. At this stage I do not know whether I am in favour of it or against it, but I thank him for setting up the committee of inquiry and we look forward to results from its report.

Mr. WALLIS-SMITH (Tablelands) (8.45 p.m.): It was quite refreshing to hear the Minister's presentation of the Estimates, particularly as he interspersed his report with explanations that at times gave rise to a little mirth. I think that that was preferable to the way in which the other Estimates were

presented, when the Ministers concerned went on and on and we ended up with mental indigestion.

Dealing with the brigalow lands, I was struck by the Minister's statement that the method of clearing was a quick one and that sometimes it was so speedy that the area cleared could become too large. I am pleased to note that he realises that fact, because throughout Queensland it is often evident that land is destroyed from that very reason. A large area is cleared and those responsible for the clearing cannot cope with it afterwards. They get a good burn or half a burn, and noxious weeds result. There is then the problem of finding labour to cope with the weeds. If one looked at such a property five or ten years later, it would be seen that it would have been better if it had never been touched.

I hope that this is not going to happen in the brigalow lands. I am not going to say that it will not, irrespective of the amount of control exercised over clearing operations. Nature has a knack of taking a hand. A settler burns, plants seed, and waits for the rain, and that is just the time when it does not come. Weeds then have a knack of appearing instead of the grasses intended to cover the countryside. There is then the problem of reclaiming land, not from the brigalow, but from the rubbish that springs up. Goodness knows where the seed comes from, but I think all will agree that wherever this happens noxious weeds that have probably not been in that part of the country for many years make their appearance.

I was interested by the mention in the report of the Land Administration Commission of the fact that there were 45 blocks for selection and 226 applicants, 167 of which passed the screening tests. That proves beyond doubt, as the hon. member for Mourilyan said, that we have plenty of young people willing and waiting to go on the land. Those are the Minister's figures which I know to be true. If land is opened up, there will always be people to ballot for it.

As the hon. member for Carnarvon pointed out, it is necessary to have a lot of money. I do not think that capital should have the importance that sometimes the Government puts on it in ballot nominations. The Minister said tonight that he leaned towards small landholders rather than companies. I was pleased to hear that and I should like to see a practical application of that attitude to ballots for brigalow blocks or pastoral holdings. I ask the Minister to please try to lean towards the little men and help them, not with money, but by suggestions they put up that would make it easier for them to be successful. One example of what I have in mind would be providing fencing material under a suitable scheme. That would be one way of helping the little man with the necessary

qualifications and desire to succeed, but not the required capital. He will be kept out for all time under the present conditions, as he will never have enough money. The hon. member for Carnarvon said that even with a double amount of land it was 20 years before he could say, "I have a working area and I am making a go of it." Twenty years is a long time, and a double amount of land would not be available for that time. I do not think any one could get more than the area that the Government decided should be granted. We had the spectacle of about 180 disappointed settlers who had submitted applications to participate in the ballot not being able to get a piece of land.

The Minister referred to national parks, and I hope that he gives them a great deal of attention. In my opinion, the need to set aside national parks and similar areas for future generations cannot be stressed too strongly. This must be impressed on the minds of the Minister for Lands and his officers, and we must ensure that it is kept firmly in the minds of future governments. The Minister said that 60,000 acres were not sufficient to ensure the safety and retention of our fauna. I should say that that is probably correct, because it is not a very large area in which to preserve the natural life of a particular district. I think it might be wise to have a large area in one place and smaller areas in other places. In my opinion, 80,000 or 90,000 acres in one place will not suffice. There should be numerous areas, both large and small, throughout the State. Where brigalow scrub has been cleared, the natural flora and fauna has probably been destroyed for all time. As the Minister said, it would be wrong to destroy it completely, because future generations would have no idea what the country was like. I think it is in the interests of the State to preserve as a sort of national museum portion of the country in which certain species of trees and animals abound and ensure that they will always be there in future.

It must be remembered, also, that flora attracts rain. We know that if large areas of timber and scrub are destroyed, rainfall is reduced. It is necessary to attract rainfall to areas where a strike of seed is required and there are no natural water supplies. The Minister mentioned that some areas were on the banks of a river, but I am sure that many other areas will be remote from rivers or irrigation.

He also said that it was a national responsibility to develop Queensland, especially North Queensland. He is probably right, but what can he do about it? He said that Queensland had received considerable assistance from the Commonwealth Government and that he hoped there would be more. If I may say so, he should not only hope for more but see that we get more. As a Government of the same political colour as this Government has been in office

in Canberra, probably the Queensland Government should have got more than it has. After 30 November it will be easier to obtain.

The Minister said that leasehold tenure has its advantages, and so it has. He said that its first advantage was that it was cheaper. The hon. member for Carnarvon said that a great deal of money was needed to ensure success. Here is one way in which not so much is needed, because it will not cost a man so much to get onto the land. We know that freeholding is Government policy, but I think it is the name that appeals to the public more than anything else. The Minister knows quite well that leasehold can be resold just as freehold can. So, what is the difference? No-one can tell me differently, so it really becomes a matter of popular opinion. The Government's attitude to freehold is much the same as its attitude to the Bill of Rights. It sounded good in their policy speech. Everyone thought we were living under a Bill of Wrongs, but the sound of it gave a nice popular feeling. Freehold has a sound about it that appeals to the public as a whole; the Government realises that and so continues with the policy.

The Minister mentioned that individual lessees were preferable to companies. That is something on which I can speak because, in my area, large cattle holdings have been taking over smaller holdings and becoming so extraordinarily large that their annual losses from natural causes would stock a small station.

The hon. member for Gregory mentioned that it was like a rolling wave, one station being taken over after another. That apparently happens in the sheep areas in his electorate as it does in the cattle areas in mine. The small man asks for a little assistance and cannot get it. Therefore, he has to let the land go, and who gets it? The big fellow next door or across the roadway, and so it goes on until such time as the population in the area dwindles to a station manager and a few employees, in areas that should comprise a half a dozen or even more smaller holdings.

The Minister said he preferred individual leases. I hope he gives practical application to that preference, and when small farmers come to his department for some assistance to help them to hang on for a few more years, they get it, and get on their feet.

Where large areas have been subdivided, it has not been many years before the small fellows walked off. The land goes back to the big fellows again, and the same vicious circle results with the large holder in possession of most of the areas and running them with very few employees. The Minister should not just say that without giving it practical application, with closer settlement, more stations and more people on the land. He said it was necessary to put companies

on this land in order to develop it, but we want to know when it will be developed to the stage when it is ready to be subdivided.

There is an area in my electorate about which I have made representations on several occasions. I saw the file of one grazier with a small area and I was astounded at the thickness of the file. It showed that he has been for a long time trying to get an extra area from an expired holding. He is only asking for a small area but he has been refused on countless occasions.

As the hon. member for Carnarvon said, the added areas to these small holdings mean very little to the large holdings, which can afford to lose from a quarter to three-quarters of their areas and probably more. If it can possibly be done, I should like to see a large number of people benefiting. However, if only a small amount is made available now and again, the small holders have to be lucky, as in the past, to get any of it, and so the real value is lost.

The hon. member for Gregory referred to ballots. They would be better understood by him than by me. If the hon. member is prepared to raise that matter it makes me think that there may be some truth in the complaints I get. I understand they talk a different language out there from the man in the city. Up to the present my experience has been in visiting their farms and holdings and hearing about their problems. When they make their complaints about ballots I often think they may have a chip on their shoulder, but when the hon. member for Gregory sees fit to bring this matter up perhaps they have cause for complaint, and perhaps there should be an improvement in the balloting system. Let us hope there will be.

The problem of King Ranch has been dealt with very fully by both the hon. member for Mourilyan and the hon. member for Townsville North. There is very little more I can say. I know wallum soil quite well, and to compare wallum soil with North Queensland soil is absolutely ridiculous. In most of those North Queensland areas, similar to where King Ranch is situated, the soil is of considerable depth and a sandy nature. There can be parts where there would be a different texture altogether. The wallum country has 5 to 6 inches of soil and then very heavy clay. If you try to run cattle on wallum country you quickly find that they are laid low with rickets. That shows that something is presently lacking in the soil. It may be said that that can be overcome, but this is more expense. There is no comparison between the two areas.

I come to the help given to King Ranch in comparison with that given to anyone else. If any hon. member had a relative who took up a holding anywhere, would he expect to get a road like the one illustrated in the annual report of the Land Administration Commission? It is described underneath

as "Road construction by Forestry Department—King Ranch (Aust.) Pty. Ltd. cattle fattening project near Tully". It may be a coincidence but it is a very nice coincidence for King Ranch. The number of farmers on whose behalf I have made representations concerning road problems since I have been here are too numerous to mention. It would seem that apart from getting very good service from the Government as regards price and everything else King Ranch are also getting amenities which people who have been on the land all their lives find it difficult to get.

One of the main reasons for the spread of noxious weeds is the infestation along roads. In a section of the report dealing with stock routes reference is made to wild tobacco as a noxious weed. There is enough wild tobacco growing along the roadside in the Tablelands area to keep the whole of Australia supplied with seed indefinitely, yet nothing is being done about it. If sufficient funds were made available to local authorities prepared to carry out the work properly, they would be able to control the spread of noxious weeds throughout the State. The hon. member for Carnarvon spoke of a particular problem in his area. The report contains a long list of noxious weeds. It is not right that a shire council should have the right to say that a certain plant was not a noxious weed. The nursery of noxious weeds in my area is along the side of all roads, not only main roads. It is high time that the Government ensured that noxious weeds were removed, not only from properties, but also from roads under the control of government departments.

The Rural Fires Board is mentioned in another part of the Minister's report, although he did not deal with it fully in his speech. The activities of this body are worth while when one gets away from the towns and closely settled areas. Anything that will increase the number of rural fire brigades and will encourage their formation in various districts will be of untold benefit. On flights from Brisbane to Cairns it is remarkable to see the number of fires burning throughout the coastal strip. Sometimes they are a menace not only to the timber and natural grasses, but also to property and sometimes to lives. We need only one good season to realise that, as soon as the prolific growth dries off, there is a vast fire menace. Even the town of Ravenshoe, in which I live, has been menaced on several occasions by fire and, compared with rural areas further out, it is a populated area. I notice that the number of rural fire brigades is growing, although I do not think it is increasing as it should. If the Minister could devise some means of making these brigades more acceptable to the people, and making the people more conscious of their necessity, he would be doing something worth while.

I now wish to refer to the 18,000 acres of scrub land in the King Ranch area. The

report of the timber convention in Adelaide stresses that, if possible, all known timber reserves should be held for timber conservation. I know that a great deal of the timber in the King Ranch area is being destroyed. If the land was to be used for the production of sugar, and no other land was available, the destruction of the timber would be justified. However, the inclusion of this 18,000 acres will mean that the timber will be lost for all time when it is cleared. That is a backward step. No-one should have allowed that timber to be wasted. It is quite close to the mills; it does not have to be carted hundreds of miles as has some timber on the Tableland. It is a backward step to allow these 18,000 acres to be lost to the timber industry for ever.

Many factors concerning the King Ranch have been placed before the Minister to-night. I think the Minister should remember, if he wants to experiment on any future occasion, that a large number of people are still looking for blocks. If he put some of these people, whom he knows, on the blocks he would get just as good results from them. He does not know the King Ranch people; they come from overseas. It is said that it is all to the department's advantage; let us hope that it is.

Mr. MURRAY (Clayfield) (9.10 p.m.):
Mr. Hodges,——

Mr. Davies: Does the hon. member still think that King Ranch lease is the best land in Australia?

Mr. MURRAY: I will come to that in a moment. May I say at the outset that I am pleased to rise in this debate to say a few words about matters that I am concerned with. First of all, I think the Minister has a tremendously difficult job in the administration of the Lands portfolio. Anybody who disagrees with that has surely never given it much thought. I do not know that there would be a more difficult portfolio to administer in this State. It is tremendously difficult and I think any Minister for Lands needs as much sympathy and help as he can get. Constructive criticism, certainly; but he should not be pulled down. I doubt whether it does this Parliament much good for the Opposition to suggest that this Minister would ever engage in anything underhand when they know very well that he would never do any such thing. They know perfectly well that he is decent and that he is completely above that sort of thing. He is a man of the highest integrity, yet they raise issues of this sort suggesting that there is something underhand.

Mr. Davies: We didn't raise the issue. The hon. member for Gregory raised it.

Mr. MURRAY: This has almost developed into the "King Ranch debate".

Mr. Mann: It smells.

Mr. MURRAY: The hon. member suggests now that the Minister is doing something dishonest.

Mr. Davies: You said it was the best land in Australia, the Minister said it was practically a swamp. Where can we get the truth?

Mr. MURRAY: Never mind. Those are interpretations of the value of the land. It does not mean the Minister is doing something dishonest. I think he deserves a great deal of sympathy and far more help from the Opposition and the Parliament generally than he gets. After all, just think back a bit. If you wanted to analyse this, I do not think you have very much to be proud of in the administration of land in Queensland over the last 40 years.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hodges): Order! I ask the hon. member to address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. MURRAY: Hon. members opposite will remember that, in the Address-in-Reply debate, I said that this State carries a stigma in the eyes of the Commonwealth and the investing world at large with respect to land policy, controls and insecurity of tenure. That is not the fault of this Government. It inherited the mess—and it has been a mess, without any doubt. Let us analyse it for a moment. It has held this State back way down at the bottom of the scale in land development in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Mann: Have you read the Payne Report?

Mr. MURRAY: Yes. I have read all these reports. One has only to look at the development that has taken place in Queensland, remembering that above the 20-inch isohyet there are 190,000,000 or so acres of land suitable for cultivation, in which real development could have taken place. Actually, south of Capricorn you can take it above the 20-inch isohyet, and north of Capricorn the 25-inch isohyet, and in those areas we have 190,000,000 acres of land available for pasture improvement and agriculture in one form or another. In all that area, we have only 6,000,000 acres pasture-improved or cultivated in any form. There is a little over 6,000,000 acres, in the whole area, including all the sugar lands, and the Darling Downs. There are about 4,000,000 acres under the plough, in cultivation under crops of one type or another, and about 2,000,000 acres under pasture improvement.

Mr. Walsh: Are you suggesting that the landholder fell down on his job?

Mr. MURRAY: No, I am not. He never knew what his future was but he is starting to know now. He is beginning to realise that under this Government he will have security of tenure and can make long-term plans for the future.

We heard today from the hon. member for Townsville North. What does he want?

Does he want a lot of little peasants? He seems to be afraid that somebody might make a profit in this State.

Mr. Tucker: What do you want?

Mr. MURRAY: I want economic land usage and good production. Mr. Dedman not so long ago was completely against people in Australia owning their own homes. He said that he did not want a lot of capitalists. All that these men want is control, control, and control. There is no doubt that they have nothing whatever to be proud of and no reason to accuse anyone in this Parliament, particularly the Minister for Lands, who is, as I and all hon. members know, a man of vision and wisdom in land administration. He is a man who knows what is right for the State and who set out to put right the wrongs perpetrated by hon. members on the other side. Without doubt there was a tremendous legacy of them.

Let me say also that there is no doubt in any one's mind that the principal form of land usage that the Minister has to face up to in this area above the 20-inch isohyet, which is half of Queensland, is the beef-cattle industry. It is in this area, of course, that the greatest cattle numbers are.

Mr. Walsh: Where?

Mr. MURRAY: Above the 20-inch isohyet, where 6,000,000 out of the 7,000,000 beef cattle in Queensland are. For the enlightenment of the hon. member for Bundaberg, half of Queensland's beef cattle are south of Townsville and east of the Great Dividing Range. It is not a great outback industry, as many hon. members imagine. They just do not know. It is in the area above the 20-inch isohyet that the principal development of the State must take place, and that is the area that the Minister is concerned with.

If anyone seriously believes that the Minister is not doing his job in land administration, let him get out and see for himself. Some of us have been out quite a lot lately—twice in the last few months—with the utmost co-operation of the department and Mr. Muir, and we have had a good look around. We were worried about some aspects of the matter because we did not know enough about them. I suggest that hon. members opposite get out and talk to a cross-section of the settlers on their blocks. See what is being done. Fly over the country and see the development taking place, which could never have taken place under the Government of hon. members on the other side. I have no doubt at all that under the Minister's administration land development is going ahead as it should. It is tremendously important to Queensland—vitaly important.

I believe that during the next few years the Minister for Lands, working in conjunction with the Minister for Primary

Industries, will make a really great contribution to our home and export markets and our domestic and overseas income. We cannot alter these things overnight. It takes time to bring land into production, and the planning of schemes such as the brigalow scheme requires a great deal of foresight and detailed study. It is a bold and well-conceived plan, and again I ask hon. members opposite to go out and have a look at it and see for themselves.

I mentioned the importance of this Minister's working in conjunction with the Minister for Primary Industries. It is important because virtually the whole of this land—hon. members on this side of the Chamber realise it, if hon. members opposite do not—will be used principally for beef cattle. What we have to face up to is that, because of the lack of action over the past 40 years, our beef-cattle numbers are not increasing.

Mr. Tucker: Whose fault is that?

Mr. MURRAY: I shall tell the hon. member whose fault it is. In about 1895 there were 7,000,000 head of beef cattle in Queensland. In 1910 the number had decreased to about 4,000,000. It rose again in the late 1920's and early 1930's to 7,000,000 and has never risen above that.

Mr. Tucker: Why?

Mr. MURRAY: Simply because hon. members opposite never understood that in 1895 the actual level of native pastures was exhausted by the number of cattle then existing and they did nothing over all those years.

Mr. Walsh: You mean the landholders did nothing.

Mr. MURRAY: Hon. members opposite did nothing. They did not provide incentives such as security of tenure to ensure that development took place and properties were improved to increase beef-cattle production.

Mr. Walsh: It is a pity you did not look up the coastline and see all the small farmers there.

Mr. MURRAY: I have been up there many times.

Although production has been increased by about 40 per cent., beef-cattle numbers have remained static. Only by action such as is being taken now will they be increased. Unless we face up to the task quickly—the Minister has started to—we will not maintain our position as the beef-cattle State, which is almost our right. As I said, we have reached this stage because of neglect over many years.

The Minister has introduced freeholding of land, and the hon. member for Carnarvon dealt with this matter very well. He was perfectly correct in what he said; there is no doubt about that.

Mr. Walsh: What do you think about perpetual lease?

Mr. MURRAY: Perpetual lease is quite good in the far outback; but in areas above the 20-inch isohyet where land capable of development must be developed rapidly, freehold tenure is obviously correct. Look at what has happened in New South Wales. Virtually all the land in areas above the 20-inch isohyet is freehold. In the outback, because of the Western Lands Commission, there is perpetual lease, but in areas of better rainfall the land is freehold. What about Victoria? Can anyone really point to evidence showing that aggregations are taking place because land is freehold? In fact, the effect is just the opposite. Because land is freehold and negotiable, subdividing takes place automatically.

Mr. Davies: In Victoria the Government had to buy back millions of acres.

Mr. MURRAY: If the hon. member goes to Victoria, if he goes down through the better lands in New Wales, he will see they are freehold. He knows perfectly well that they have subdivided because the land was negotiable. With the new techniques that are available, the land-owner can, if he wants to, dispose of portion of his land at will for the price he can receive on the market, to finance himself in the better techniques, and run far more stock on the smaller area because of the new techniques.

There has been a lot of ballyhoo from the other side about the problems of land. Let me deal with the King Ranch lease at Tully. I did say that that scrub land was rich land; it is extremely rich land. There is no doubt about that. It is good land, but what did hon. members opposite do about it?

Mr. Wallis-Smith: We did not give it away.

Mr. MURRAY: They gave it away when they did nothing about it. I heard Brice Henry's name mentioned today. In 1936, Brice Henry, for the Tully Chamber of Commerce, presented a report to the Queensland Government on the possibilities of cattle-fattening at Tully. What happened to it? It was the very area that the hon. member for Mourilyan is now belly-aching about. I would be very interested to see if there is in "Hansard" prior to 1958 any record of the hon. member for Mourilyan standing up in this place and advocating cattle-fattening at Tully.

Mr. Byrne: Every year.

Mr. MURRAY: I would be very interested to see it.

Mr. Hanlon: Every speech he made.

Mr. MURRAY: Prior to 1958? In any case, if he did, what did his Government do? That was an absolute disgrace. He knows perfectly well there were two blocks at Tully to which the Minister made reference today. One block was drawn by a young man named Dynan and the other by a man

named Mackley. For 26 years those blocks were in dispute as to whether or not they would be opened. The hon. member for Mourilyan knows that very well.

Mr. BYRNE: I rise to a point of order. The properties were known as Munro's Hill and time and time again I have advocated the opening of that land. That is on record in "Hansard".

Mr. MURRAY: He knows perfectly well about those two blocks of land. As a matter of fact, it was not until the present Minister took over the portfolio of Lands that they were opened up, and they were opened up under the old land laws. The Minister opened them at our urgent request before any thought was given to the matter by the hon. member for Mourilyan. He opened them under the old land laws, under which no conditions at all were required. They were opened just as if Labour had opened them up, and what happened? The hon. member for Mourilyan knows. It would be rather interesting to hear him recite it. There was a large number of applicants. They needed only £50 to lodge with their applications.

Mr. Byrne: Whose fault was that?

Mr. MURRAY: The hon. member's Government's fault, for their rotten land laws. This Minister opened that land up but he soon corrected those things. He knows now. He had only just taken over the portfolio when he came to me at Ingham, or Townsville, and we drove right through the area for three days. The Minister recalls this. He realised then what had happened. All that these men had to do was put in £50 and an application. One, young Dynan, was a rather successful applicant and will do well. I think the Minister will agree that the only equity in life of the other man, Mackley, was a paint brush, but he borrowed or secured £50 to apply for the block. Of course, he would never do well because that is very expensive country to develop. Everybody realises that. Once it is developed the reward is high, but it is tremendously expensive to develop. The scrub land is very rich land indeed, but the forest land is inferior.

In reply to the hon member for Tablelands, I point out that the land he spoke of is wallum country. If he doubts that I suggest that he inquire of the soils division of the C.S.I.R.O. They will tell him that it is high-class wallum land. So is the Gulf country.

Once this land is developed it is good, but it is highly expensive. There is a great risk in developing it, as everyone knows. The fact of the matter is that for all these years the land lay idle. Nothing was done with it; no effort was made to open it up. It would have been still idle. But because the Minister has given one of the best companies in land development—King Ranch—a lease to develop it we have nothing but

criticism and suggestions that there are dishonest practices. That is the type of company and form of development that Queensland needs. That is the form of development that Queensland has lacked for all these years. Here we have the chance. It is the green light. Hon. members opposite would put the red light on again. That is all they know. What is being done should be encouraged and praised, not howled down with suggestions that dishonest practices are being indulged in. Hon. members opposite have brought great discredit to themselves by their actions. I conclude by saying that the Minister deserves far more sympathy and co-operation than hon. members opposite are prepared to give.

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) (9.32 p.m.): Having listened carefully to the hon. member for Clayfield, I feel that although he was coming out strongly on the side of the Minister on the freeholding of land, at the same time and in another way he was administering a rebuke to the Country Party because of its land policy. I say that, because of an article by Mr. Hartwig in the November 1962 issue of "The Queensland Liberal."

Mr. Murray: Who is he?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I do not know. I take it that he would be one of the hon. member's mates.

Mr. Hartwig said—

"Some Liberal politicians seem to think more as Socialists than as Liberals. Not unnaturally the reputation of Liberals as men of principle have become tarnished. I think it is right to say that there are many who, like myself, entered the 1957 State Election Campaign full of hope for victory and for resultant changes in State policy. Victory was achieved; and repeated in 1960. Some of us still find difficulty in discerning significant changes in policy.

"Too many Socialist undertakings continue to drain the public purse; too much legislation that is socialist in principle remains on the Statute book; too many administrative decisions are based on Socialistic reasoning.

"Has expediency triumphed over moral principles?"

Although the hon. member for Clayfield is one who would attack the land policy of the Australian Labour Party on the floor of the Chamber at every opportunity, I feel that I detected an underlying current of giving a very large whack to the hand of the Minister administering the land policy in the Country Party. My purpose in rising this evening was to take the opportunity of bringing to the notice of the Committee a matter which I feel is not only affecting one individual, but one which could have a much more widespread effect because of industrial development.

The matter I wish to raise has been the subject of considerable correspondence between the Minister for Lands and me, and between me and the Premier and the person concerned, and many officers of the Land Administration Commission. I refer to the resumption for school purposes of an area of land owned by Mr. Keown, known as resubdivision 97, subdivision 3, portion 368, Parish of Oxley, County of Stanley, containing an area of 3 acres 3 roods 39.6 perches. This land was resumed on 6 July, 1962 for the re-siting of the Carole Park State School. That school had to be re-sited because of a Government decision, in conjunction with the Savoy Corporation, to develop what is known as the Queensfield industrial project. The Carole Park school was located in the area of the proposed industrial development.

It may be fairly said that the only reason for re-siting this school was to suit the interests of the Savoy Corporation for the development of the industrial site at Wacol. The area of land resumed comprised two properties. In one instance, because of economic circumstances, the owner was forced to accept the amount offered by the Land Administration Commission, but the resumption of the other property is being bitterly contested by the owner because he believes that the compensation offered by the Land Administration Commission is certainly not in his interests. From my knowledge of the property I should say that he is being fleeced of his property and is certainly not being adequately compensated for it.

I was interested this afternoon to hear the Minister speaking about the terms of valuation. He said that valuations were based on the sales of comparable land in the area. If that formula was applied to determine the compensation payable for this land, the person concerned is being grossly fleeced. I think I can clarify his position if I read to the Chamber a copy of a letter forwarded by him to the Secretary of the Land Administration Commission setting out the reasons for his opinion that he was not getting a fair deal. Before reading the letter, I point out that in the first instance the Land Administration Commission offered him £1,300 for the property. Because he declined to accept this offer, following a conference the offer for this area of approximately 4 acres was subsequently increased to £1,750. He claims that he has been unjustly treated.

He says—

“As previously pointed out this resumption cannot be regarded as a normal resumption of land for a school site and while I understand that the function of your Department is to assess the value of property in connection with normal resumptions it is contended that under the circumstances that exist in this case is one for higher authority.”

The gentleman goes on to say that, if he was wrong in that assumption, he would stand to be corrected. He goes on further to say that he was advised that, prior to the issue of the notice of intention to resume in the Government Gazette, the land in question was inspected by the two Ministers directly concerned. I take it they were the Minister for Education and the Minister for Labour and Industry. He says this inspection was—

“. . . subsequent to the decision of the Government to make available an area of 420 acres (plus or including the present school site) to the Savoy Corporation. I would refer you in this connection to the State Government agreement with the Savoy Corporation signed by the Premier, Mr. Nicklin, on 12 February 1963.”

As I pointed out, this was not a normal resumption for a school site. The property was resumed to re-site the school merely to accommodate the Savoy Corporation project in the Wacol area.

The letter goes on to say—

“Assets of this Southern company disclosed in the last balance sheet totalled more than £2,000,000, a net profit was disclosed as £98,085 and a 12½ per cent. dividend was paid to shareholders. It is therefore obvious that the acquisition of my land is to provide this company with the extra land on which the school is at present situated. This is not only in the interest of the State but also in the company concerned with the proposed industrial development. The former Queensland Deputy Premier, Mr. Morris, now a resident director of Industrial Estates Pty. Ltd., a subsidiary of the Savoy Corporation Ltd., stated at a Press conference in Sydney on 8 August 1963 that the completed development of this area would cost £25,000,000 and employ 9,000 people and that the surrounding area would provide home sites.”

I say that would be a fair and reasonable summing up of the development of this land and I say also that, with the development of this industrial site, the property adjacent to it will become extremely valuable for subdivision into home sites.

The writer of the letter goes on to say—

“Despite the above facts and that the present school is to be shifted to my land to make way for this industrial development the Crown has offered me the sum of £1,300 as compensation—”

For 4 acres of land across the road from this industrial development site.

As I pointed out, with the growth of industry in that area and the demand for housing when the subdividers move in, the land adjacent to the industrial site will become extremely valuable for building lots. To go on a little further, the gentleman had this to say—

"A 32 perch allotment on which my home is situated at Indooroopilly, Brisbane (and on which I have been compelled to borrow money owing to the resumption of my land at Gales), would readily sell for £1,500 and yet the Crown has offered me the sum of £1,300 for an area of approximately 4 acres . . ."

I submit that this person has been unjustly treated; he has not been offered fair compensation for this land, and this Government has not resumed the land for normal school purposes. Had this been a resumption of land centrally situated in a certain area and desired for the erection of a school to serve the area, this gentleman could possibly have had little quarrel with the amount offered. It may have been reasonable if the land had been undeveloped and in an outer suburb with very essential services. I point out that at present there are only approximately 100 children attending the Carole Park State School. If this had been a normal resumption to establish a small school to serve an area such as this, the land values could possibly be low.

Because there is to be a vast industrial development in the area, it takes little imagination, knowing the demand for houses that follows in the wake of the development of such areas, to realise that land adjacent to the area will become extremely valuable in the near future.

If the argument is carried a little further and based on comparable sales of land in the area, I should like the Minister to indicate what he considers four acres of land in this industrial area would be worth today for industrial purposes. Originally the Land Administration Commission was prepared to offer only £1,300 as compensation, and it was only after months of protracted negotiations and resistance by this person that the offer was finally increased to £1,750. Basing its valuations on the four acres of land, the Government, through the Land Administration Commission, is prepared to offer only £437 an acre.

Mr. Hanlon: Either they are diddling him or they have little confidence in Mr. Morris's work.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: That could be so.

Mr. Camm: What is the Valuer-General's valuation?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I do not care what the Valuer-General's valuation is. I am trying to point out that this person is being unfairly treated. The hon. member interjected and wants me to enlighten him. If he will give me his attention, I feel that he will go away completely satisfied with my explanation.

Mr. Camm: I think you have an exaggerated opinion of yourself.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I possibly have not the exaggerated opinion of myself that the hon. member for Mirani has of the hon.

member for Whitsunday, because already he has him lined up for a Cabinet appointment.

Irrespective of the value placed on this property by the Valuer-General, it cannot be disputed that its value for subdivision into home sites will increase considerably immediately this industrial development takes place. Because of this, I say that this person is being unjustly penalised. As I said, unfortunately the other property owner concerned in the resumption was forced, because of his financial circumstances, to accept the offer and was unable to contest it in court.

Mr. Hanlon: Do you think that the Treasurer will knock the school down later and sell the land to an oil company at a big profit?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: If he adopts the procedure followed at Inala, he probably will.

There can be no doubt that this person is being unfairly treated. As he is in a somewhat better financial position than the other person to whom I have referred, he intends to contest the offer of compensation for the land. However, I am bringing the matter before the Committee tonight because I think it could be the forerunner of many other similar situations. The Government should be fair and not ride roughshod over these people, removing a school from a proposed industrial site and resumming property that was developed by a person who went to the area many years ago before there was a school there. The irony of the whole situation is that the person who now finds that he is forced to battle to obtain anything like adequate compensation for his property was one of the people responsible for the erection of the Carole Park school. He is not being unjust in his estimation of what would be a fair valuation of the property. He has asked the Land Administration Commission for £5,000 for four acres of ground, plus survey fees, legal costs, and so on. I think the total claim is about £5,300.

Ordinary land for subdivision in various parts of Brisbane would bring £1,000 an acre. As a matter of fact, in certain areas even as far out as Sunnybank and Coopers Plains subdividers are getting almost as much as that for an allotment, but I think it would be safe to say that £1,000 an acre for land for subdivision would be a reasonable figure, yet, because the Government wanted a school—not that it wanted this ground for a usual school site but because it wanted to clear the way for the development of this industrial corporation—it has the colossal audacity to offer this man £457 an acre for land which, following the development of this site, will become extremely valuable. I think I have made my point.

If the Government, the Premier, and the Minister for Lands, with whom I have had correspondence on this matter and who shows a singularly one-track mind on it, refuse to accept the principle that this is not

an ordinary resumption, that it is a resumption of an extraordinary nature, and are not prepared to recognise the fact that this land will become very valuable it is time they reorientated their thinking. I am not particularly concerned about the individual but I am concerned that with industrial development coming forward in the near future—as we all hope it will—the same thing could happen to others. I do not think these matters should go on endlessly so that anyone who is placed in such a position has to exhaust every legal means to obtain a just and equitable price for his land.

At 9.55 p.m., under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 15 October, progress was reported.

The House adjourned at 9.56 p.m.